DECEMBER

66

Polyhedron

NEWSZINE

RPGA NETWORK

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Conventions

COCOA CON '91 December 27-29
Grantville, PA
This convention will be held at the Holiday Inn in Grantville. Events include a miniatures painting contest, monster design contest, magic design contest, and 24-hour open gaming. Game events include the AD&D® game, Advanced Squad Leader, BattleTech, Shadowrun, BOOT HILL® game, Silent Death, Vampire, Circus Maximus, Kingmaker, and many more. For information write: COCA CON '91, 210 South Grant Street, Palmyra, PA 17076, or call 717-838-9784 during the evening.

Wright State University Game Fair, January 18-19 *Fairborn, OH*
Join us at Wright State University's main campus for a weekend of gaming, featuring introductory sessions of The Fifth Cycle by Shield Games, a parents' seminar on what role-playing games are all about, and several Network events. Registration discounts are available to Network members and to all gamers who attend both days. Players and game masters seeking more information should write: Scott Hala, Game Fair Director, WSU Adventurers' Guild, P.O. Box 31016, Dayton, OH 45431-0016.

CANCON 14, January 25-27
Canberra, Australia
This is Australia's largest game convention, featuring the Australian ancients titles, Diplomacy Worldcon, and 20 role-playing tournaments including several Network events. Write or ring for an entry form: Wes Nicholson, GPO Box 1016, Canberra, ACT 2601 Australia, 06-254-9926.

ConnCon '92, March 27-28
Danbury, CT
You're invited! Please join us for role-playing games, war games, miniatures, seminars, a miniatures painting contest, an art show, dealers area, and awards banquet. RSVP ConnCon, P.O. Box 444, Sherman, CT 06784-0444.

MidSouth Con XI, March 27-29
Memphis, TN
Our site is the Airport Hilton in Memphis. Our schedule includes regular and benefit tournaments for the AD&D game, Champions, Cyberpunk, Call of Cthulhu, Star Wars, Robotech, BattleTech, and six board games. There also will be a dealers room, masquerade, movie room, art show, panels, computer games, and guests Margaret Weis and Beth Willinger. Registration fees are $20 until March 1st; $25 thereafter. Information: Bonnie Kornrumpf, 660 McWhirter Ave., Memphis, TN 38127.

Sydcon '92, April 17-20
Sydney, Australia
Sydcon is on again this Easter at Glebe High School in Sydney. We'll have lots of tournaments to choose from, featuring the AD&D game, Freeforms, and a Network Paranoia scenario. For an entry form write: Helen Wallach, GPO Box 4409, Sydney, NSW 2001, Australia.

Classifieds

Florida: Attention all gamers: A Network club is forming in South Florida. We play the AD&D® game, D&D® game, and GURPS. We are interested in all other role-playing games. Contact Wayne Rosser, 8200 N.W. 70th Ave., Tamarac, FL 33321, 305-721-8071.

Iowa: I am an avid fan of the Ars Magica system. I especially enjoy its Mythic Europe game setting. If you have similar interests, please write me: Donald M. Hempill, RR #1 Box 30, Newton, IA 50208.

Michigan: Wanted: Dungeon Master, new players, or a campaign in the Holland area. We mostly play the original AD&D game. Please contact: James Hoover, 3178 Acron Drive, Hamilton, MI 49419, or call 616-751-2061.

New Hampshire: I am a 13-year-old male player/DM looking for gamers in the Conway area. I want to start a club. I play the D&D game and the AD&D game and would like to learn others. You can call me at 603-447-3242 or write: Shea Gunther, 27 Saco Woods, Conway, NH 03813.

New York: I am an 11-year-old looking for AD&D 2nd Edition game players in the Ulster County area. I am willing to learn other games. I also am interested in buying old AD&D 2nd Edition game modules. Please write: Laura Braslow, 86 Sherry Lane, Kingston, NY 12401.

General: Dragonslayers Unlimited is looking for new members. We are a registered Network club dedicated to playing games by mail. Our club has more than 60 members in the USA and has just added members from Australia and Sweden. We run AD&D games, DAWN PATROL® games, Arcanum, Heroes Unlimited, and others. If you appreciate play-by-mail gaming, Dragonslayers Unlimited might be for you. Write: Dragonslayers Unlimited c/o Bill Brierton, 3709 Pecan Ct., Waldorf, MD 20602.

General: I am looking for out of print items for the AD&D game and the D&D game. I'm also trying to find issues of DRAGON® Magazine, DUNGEON® Adventures, and POLYHEDRON™ Newszine that are no longer available in mail order. If you have any ideas or are willing to sell these items, please let me know. I have to do everything by mail. Please send information to: Sgt. Robert L. Wilbey II, 40CG/DOA, PSC S4, Box 1294, APO AE 09601.

General: Wanted: A copy of the discontinued Milton Bradley game Fortress America. If the game is in good condition, I will offer a good price. Contact: Brian Polts, 5211-45th Close, Innisfail, Alberta T0M 1A0 Canada.

General: I have for sale a variety of AD&D game, STAR FRONTIERS® game, GAMMA WORLD® game, and GANGBUSTERS™ game supplements. For more information send a SASE to: Bill Brierton, 3709 Pecan Ct., Waldorf, MD 20602.

General: Help! I am seeking old game programs for the Apple computer. In particular, I'm looking for Cosmic Balance, which is no longer manufactured and is unavailable at retail stores. If you have any programs please contact: Scott Jones, 1800 Foursite LN. Apt. #1, Thousand Oaks, CA 91362.

About the Cover

Artist Gary M. Williams portrays Oljagg and Pitha in Oljagg's Rag and Bottle Shop, our Living City offering.

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Polyhedron™ NEWSZINE

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Notes From HQ

Year Eleven Draws To A Close

The RPGA™ Network made quite a few strides this past year—its 11th in operation.

The POLYHEDRON™ Newszine went monthly; we opened our third international branch in Oslo, Norway; a record number of Network clubs have signed on; and we kicked off our Retailer Program.

Our membership continues to grow, although not as quickly as I would like. The number of conventions where you can find Network-sponsored events is increasing.

And, best yet, an increasing number of Network members are trying their hand at writing tournaments and POLYHEDRON Newszine articles and assisting at conventions throughout the world.

So, all in all, 1991 has been a very good year.

Winter Fantasy

The Network's own convention is right around the corner. Mark your calendars for Winter Fantasy, January 3-5, at the Ramada Inn Convention Center in Milwaukee. We will be featuring several brand-new tournaments, including a one-round club event sure to test the gaming mettle of the participants. And look at the mailer cover for news about our 1992 Club Decathlon.

And Speaking About Clubs....

Many club members tell us they never get information about special club contests, tournaments, play-testing, and discounts. Network HQ makes periodic mailings to Network club officers to keep them posted on happenings. Network HQ can't help it if the club officers don't pass on the information. And Network HQ can't mail the information to every member of the club. It isn't practical and the postage costs would be exorbitant.

So, we'll compromise, and we'll keep hoping that club members pester their officers for updates. On this issue's mailer cover is a listing of the 1992 Club Decathlon events. Photocopy it or pull it loose from the Newszine and keep it for reference. It details each competition and lists deadlines.

Study the competitions and start making plans for the events in which your club will participate.

The Decathlon is a fun-filled, yearlong contest only open to Network sanctioned clubs.

For those of you who are not in a Network club, consider forming your own. All it takes is six RPGA Network members. Club membership forms are available from Network HQ. Or, try to join one of our many existing clubs. The January Newszine will contain an updated list of Network clubs and how to get in contact with them.

Looking Toward 1992

Network activities are already planned for next year. For example, our Club Decathlon is bigger and better than ever.

We are planning several competitions open to all Network members. Some of the contests could be derived from the contest offered on page 31. The staff thinks contests are terrific. Just look at last issue and all the potions we ran!

Our presence will be awesome at the 1992 GEN CON® Game Fair—which will be combined with Origins. We're paring down the number of tournaments offered. (Don't grumble, you can't possibly play in them all anyway.) And we're offering nifty prizes for some of the events, such as 25-month membership extensions, S.S.I computer games, and other wondrous things.

Jim Ward and I brainstormed some of the goodies, including an ingenious offering planned for the membership meeting, which will ultimately lead to Jim Ward, Jeff Grubb, and possibly others, meeting confections head-on. Hope that stirs your curiosity.

The next issue of the Newszine will contain a tentative schedule of Network events for the 1992 Game Fair. We'll also be more definitive on our prize listing so you can pick and choose what you want to play in and judge.

Please, please, please—if you know you're going to GEN CON Game Fair, make your judging commitments early. It helps the Network immeasurably.

The Telephone

You might wonder what part Ma Bell plays in the Network's upcoming plans for 1992.

She doesn't help our plans. And that's the problem.

As the RPGA Network continues to grow, the number of members wanting to talk to the staff likewise increases. We like to talk to you. We like getting mail from you (and we really do answer as many letters as possible).

But, to be frank, there are only four of us in Lake Geneva HQ, and there are more than 10,000 of you.

Because your phone calls to our offices have increased so dramatically, our productivity has decreased. It takes us longer to read tournaments and POLYHEDRON Newszine submissions, produce the Newszine, and work on other Network projects because of the phone. Prior to GEN CON Game Fair last August, we documented that we received an average of one phone call every two and one-half minutes.

Okay, now you know the situation. Here's what we're going to do about it:

The Network will now only accept phone calls after 12 p.m. Central Time. This will allow us time to work uninterrupted for at least half the day. Further, we encourage you to drop us a postcard or note when you want to bring something to our attention, and we'll respond as quickly as possible. This might sound drastic to you, but it is a better alternative than sending the Red Wizards of Thay after the telephone company.

Thanks

HQ sends its thanks this month to Network member Jean Grey of Florida. Jean, who has been a member of the Network for many years, has judged repeatedly at GEN CON Game Fair—this year several sessions of the Masters and AD&D® Game Open. She has assisted at Network HQ with crowd control during the Game Fair, and she has promoted gaming in her area. Jean is 72 years young. Thanks for your help!

Holiday Wishes

The Network staff wishes you and yours a wonderful holiday season. Keep your dice warm, and we'll see you in 1992!

Take Care, Jean Rabe ❑

Letters

Two Open Letters to the Membership

Doing Well, Doing Good

For the first time most attendees of Glathricon '90 could recall, I was speechless. Network member Randall Lemon had just handed me the Joe Martin Award for Outstanding Gaming, and I didn't quite know what to say in spite of my reputation for talking up a storm.

The Joe Martin Award is a memorial honor named after an avid Kentucky gamer who died of brain cancer in 1986. He promoted the Network, raised money for conventions, and helped gaming's image through his work at a local TV station. When he played in tournaments, people had a great time.

Each year at Glathricon in Evansville, IN, the previous recipients of the award choose a new inductee. To receive this award, you don't have to be the best player, the best judge, or the best writer. The primary requirement is the perception that, as a gamer, you stand for the same thing Joe stood for: fun for everyone. You are dedicated to making sure everyone has a good time and that's about the only way you can have a good time.

In June of this year, I passed the torch to the sixth recipient of the Joe Martin Award, Don Bingle. After having as much trouble getting started as I had, Don gave an emotional speech that brought the most cynical people present to the verge of tears. He spoke of how much he treasured friends like those assembled, who stood by him even in the tough times.

Tough times—Don's words got me thinking about Joe, and how his friends told me of watching him waste away from brain cancer. Those were tough times for the Evansville Gaming Guild (EGG), Joe's club and Glathricon's sponsor. When he died, it ripped the club's soul away. In his memory, EGG and the rest of the Network created a juggernaut for good.

After Joe's death, EGG founded the Joe Martin Fund, and Glathricon began holding an annual benefit tournament for the American Cancer Society. In 1986 the tournament raised $600.00 for cancer research. A poster donated by Artist Gary Williams was auctioned the same year and brought in $100.00 for St. Jude's Children's Hospital. It sounded like a lot of money then, but we didn't know what was coming.

The GEN CON® Game Fair established a benefit event, and it has sold out each year. The Cancer Society has been among the beneficiaries, as has a youth literacy program and a school for hearing-ear dogs. This year, the event for the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin was part of a contest that sent member Ken Ritchart to the GEN CON Game Fair in Europe.

Benefit events, for which members gain double experience points, have appeared at conventions everywhere. Out east, member Reynolds Jones organized events promoting AIDS research. A California convention donated its entire receipts to the American Red Cross one year. All the Network events at last year's Council of Five Nations in New York benefitted a college scholarship fund. In Connecticut, ConnCon's benefit events help the American Heart Association.

Auctions at game conventions now routinely set aside items donated for charities. Gamers don't seem to mind paying a few extra dollars for an event ticket, piece of artwork, or a rare game if they know the proceeds are going to a charity. For a couple of years at Glathricon, member Frank Mentzer donated his beard for auction. (Thankfully, this trend has been discontinued.)

The Network has made benefit events and auctions a staple of major game conventions. Several times a year a representative of a charity stands up in front of a group of gamers and thanks them for their good works. This is a far cry from the days when gamers couldn't show a positive face to the world.

This year, I was honored to invite Diane Arneson of the Cancer Society to the stage and announce to the Glathricon crowd that we had raised more than $3,200.00 for the charity, some of it through a refreshing benefit tournament written by members Brett and Cyndi Bakke. We reached into our pockets and had fun doing it, never forgetting we were helping prevent tragedies like Joe's death.

The Network will never stop doing charity events, I think. At your next convention, when you're signing up for

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tournaments, you might have a chance to play an event benefiting a worthy cause. It might cost you a few extra dollars, but it will be worth it. I promise you it will.

Here's hoping you like what we're doing, Joe.

Mike Selinker
Chicago, IL

Where Is Everybody?

Every year the Network holds a lot of tournaments at the GEN CON® Game Fair. The Network gets a great deal of publicity from these events, which have included games from every major manufacturer. This year, the Network offered a record 39 events over 12 time slots. To recruit the necessary judges, Judge Appeal forms appeared in the Newszine long before preregistration forms were shipped.

In a fit of madness I filled out a Judge Appeal and agreed to be a judge for the third year in a row. Each year, HQ says in the Newszine that the need for judges is great, that they're short, and that you should judge. I'm here to back up that claim, with a personal history.

My first two years as a Network judge at the Game Fair, I ran three slots and then had the rest of the convention to do what I pleased. This year, I arrived at the convention late. Nevertheless, when I filled out my form I circled every time slot I would be available for—from noon Friday to the convention's end. From previous experience, I figured I wouldn't have to judge more than three or four slots out of the eight I had available. I thought I'd have plenty of time to visit the dealers' hall, check out the auction, play in a tournament or two, and maybe even sleep.

In June, however, when I got my judge conformation letter, I was surprised to find that I had been scheduled for all eight slots—five different tournaments in all. I decided that one of two things must be true: 1. HQ was short of judges, or 2. HQ thought I was a lot better judge than I thought I was. This also meant that I was scheduled to judge from noon of Friday until noon on Sunday without a break, leaving me no time to do anything else the Game Fair offers—playing, buying, auctioning, talking.

I didn't say anything to HQ because I felt that I had offered to judge whenever they needed me, and this was when I was needed.

In July I got 125 pages of tournament scenarios, characters, and NPCs to read, along with a thick sheaf of maps. Since I have a life outside of gaming, I could only spend about an hour a day reading the material. Consequentially, when convention time came I didn't feel I was familiar enough with the material to run any of it properly.

Judges represent the Network at the Game Fair. We are an extension of HQ, showing members and non-members what they get for their membership dues. If we are unprepared and don't show players a good time, it reflects poorly on the whole Network. If the only exposure to the Network a non-member gets is a boring game session from a Network judge, we've lost the opportunity to get a new member. I felt completely unready to judge anything I was supposed to, but as it turned out, I didn't do so poorly as I thought I would—that is to say, my players had a good time in spite of me. Because of a surplus of judges in the Living City 1 event, a complex scenario I just wasn't ready to run, I avoided my worst nightmare, and I got a break on the Benefit on Sunday morning. As it turned out, I judged all eight slots: The Benefit five times, Living City 2 twice, and the Paranoia Feature once. Each time I got better, but the task became wearisome. I had a great time, but at tremendous physical expense. I spent the week after the convention in bed.

I know my story is not the convention's worst. I met other judges who ran more scenarios and more slots than I did, and they looked like death incarnate. I can't help but think that more judges would have eased the situation, making the Game Fair more enjoyable for everybody.

Unfortunately, this sad state of affairs will happen again unless everyone who is capable of judging a tournament does so. I talked to a number of players about why they chose not to judge for the Network. Some folks said they didn't know they were coming until the day before the convention, and that's okay. But some people pre-registered for the '91 Game Fair in November of 1990.

One person said he was reluctant to judge a Network event at the Game Fair because he'd never judged a Network event before. He felt that he needed some experience before he'd be chosen by HQ. Nothing could be further from the truth. In my first year judging at the Game Fair, 1989, I had no experience with Network events, and I had only attended one convention—the Game Fair the year before. You don't have to prove yourself to be selected as a Network judge at the Game Fair.

Others said they didn't want to deal with all the paperwork. There really isn't that much paperwork for the judge to do. The judge must collect tickets, hand out voting sheets, collect voting sheets (and make sure they're properly filled out), vote himself, and then return the papers and tickets to the event coordinator. A judge may, but is not required to, complete the scoring grid, but the HQ staff can handle that if you don't want to do it.

Others think they're not "good enough." It is unlikely that you are a bad judge. Most people tend to underrate themselves. HQ tends to weed out judges who consistently get low ratings, so if you are asked to judge several times you must be okay.

The more people who judge, the better the pool of judges gets. Fewer scenarios for individual judges means more time for preparation, better familiarity with the scenarios, characters, and NPCs, and greater freedom to have a good time while showing the players a good time, too.

In some respects I was lucky. The scenarios I ran were well-written, easy to understand, and played well. The ease of reading made up for my short preparation time, and as I ran the events I became more familiar with them and got better as I went along. I don't regret what happened to me or how I handled it, but I do not care to repeat the experience when simply getting more people to judge will alleviate the problem.

If you are a GM in your home group and you're going to attend the Game Fair—you are fit to be a Network judge. It's never too early to volunteer for next year. I already have, and so can you.

Aaron Goldblatt
Fort Worth, TX

❑

The Living City

Oljagg's Rag and Bottle Shop

Illustration by Gary M. Williams

by Gary M. Williams

Standing on one of the twisting, dirty backstreets of Crows End (Ravens Bluffs' most disreputable neighborhood) is Oljagg's Rag and Bottle Shop. It is a two story building of cracking plaster and brick with a low overhanging roof. Two large windows, filled with bottles of every size, color, and description crowd the sills. The window panes are thick with dust and grease. A thick oak door, banded with iron, stands between the two windows and is always left open during business hours, which are between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., seven days a week.

Oljagg is well known throughout the city for his shop and for his unusual appearance and deformities. Oljagg deals in all manner of junk and refuse, buying and selling to the poor and to local businesses. His prices are fair, and over the years he has made a comfortable living for himself. Known for his soft heart, he often will overpay a silver piece or two to an aging widow or down-on-his-luck bum for what trinkets they sell him. Oljagg also has been known to run a thriving pawnbroker business. Oljagg rarely sells a pawned item. Instead he hides them away—especially if the customer is very poor—until the person can buy back the object, often for less than what he pawned it for.

The bottles in Oljagg's shop are resold to the public for containers. Some are sold to the local glass blowers to be melted down to make new bottles. The rags are sold to papermakers for paper. Bones are sold for the production of fertilizer. Scrap iron goes to the blacksmiths for their needs, while grease, drippings and other kitchen-stuffs are resold—the grease to the candle-makers and soap-boilers, and the drippings to the poor as a substitute for butter. Hides go to the leather-workers for the production of lower grade leather goods. Household items such as pots and pans, furniture, etc., are resold to the public.

Oljagg

5th Level Male Human Fighter

STR: 8
INT: 16
WIS: 15
DEX: 6
CON: 13
CHA: 17

AC Normal: 10
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 20

Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Thieves' Cant

Age: 70
Height: 5′ 6″
Weight: 129 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: White/Gray

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, short sword, pike, bow
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Appraising (19), local history (16), ancient history (17)

Oljagg appears as a small, stooped figure who walks with a slow, shuffling gait. His actual height is difficult to judge because his back, which was broken once, is twisted and makes him look shorter. Oljagg's gnarled hands, crippled with arthritis, appear almost claw-like. His sparkling gray eyes are set deep in sunken sockets, and deep wrinkles etch his haggard face. With his ragged clothing and long, white matted hair, his appearance can be quite startling to those who encounter him for the first time. Despite his physical projection, Oljagg can be quite warm and friendly, if somewhat eccentric, and can be clearly understood after a few moments of speaking to him. His warm, affable manners help give him his high Charisma score.

Oljagg was born with a harelip and a cleft pallet which left him with a severe speech impediment. He found trouble obtaining work in the town, despite his cheery disposition and good nature. At a young age, Oljagg joined the local militia and at last found a calling. He was well liked by the other men in the company and quickly rose to the rank of sergeant. It was in the army he gained the nickname that would follow him for the rest of his life. His given name was Jack, but with his severe speech problems, the name came out Jagg, and the "old" from the men's affection for a senior officer. "Old Jack" soon became Oljagg, a name he accepted willingly.

Shortly before his enlistment was up, Oljagg was involved in a drunken barroom brawl with a much stronger, and more skilled opponent. The bloody altercation left Oljagg with a broken back, and no nose, a result of a sharp short sword and a misplaced blow. Unfit for further military service, penniless and homeless, Oljagg was nursed back to health by a sympathetic local woman whom he later married. On the death of his father-in-law, Oljagg and his wife inherited the rag and bottle shop. The passing years gave Oljagg and his wife a modest, if not comfortable living, and the means with which to raise a child. They had one son, Kayle, who at the age of 21, left home for a life of adventuring. Shortly thereafter, Oljagg's wife passed away.

Esaul and Able

7th Level Male Human Fighters

STR: 18/91
INT: 10
WIS: 8
DEX: 16
CON: 16
CHA: 12

AC Normal: 4
AC Rear: 7
Hit Points: 43
Alignment: Lawful Neutral
Languages: Common

Age: 22
Height: 6′ 1″
Weight: 300 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Bald/Crystal Blue

Weapon Proficiencies: Battle axe (specialized), bastard sword, club, dagger
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Endurance (18), blind-fighting

When entering Oljagg's shop, customers are most often confronted with the huge forms of Esaul and Able, identical twins (with identical statistics) in Oljagg's employ. Both are completely hairless, square faced, and laconic.

Left on Oljagg's doorstep shortly after their birth, the twins were joined together by a narrow band of flesh at the hips. As the twins grew, the fleshy strip weakened until it eventually tore in two, separating the twins for the first time. Confused at first by the possibility of leading separate lives, the twins tied their legs together to simulate their organic bond. With patience and kindness, Oljagg taught the twins that they could now lead a separate and normal existence. In time the twins adjusted, but rarely strayed too far from one another. To the casual observer, there seems to be a telepathic bond between the two. The twins regard Oljagg as a father, although they are well aware that their real father will never be known to them. They would willingly fight to the death to protect Oljagg from harm, and they deal with any late night intruders who may try to enter the shop after hours. Rumors abound throughout town about the origins of the twins,

claiming that Oljagg is really a wizard who magically created the twins, or that they are the spawn of some hideous creatures mating with a human. Local mothers use tales of "Oljagg's Demon Twins" to frighten their children into behaving. Oljagg pays little attention to these tales. He is quite fond of the twins, treating them like his own children.

Pitha

2nd Level Female Half-Elf Wizard

STR: 8
INT: 14
WIS: 13
DEX: 16
CON: 10
CHA: 15

AC Normal: 6
AC Rear: 8
Hit Points: 5
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Elvish

Age: 19
Height: 5′ 3″
Weight: 90 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: White/Amber

Weapon Proficiencies: Staff
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Artistic ability (13), seamstress (15), herbalism (14), ancient history (13)
Magic Item: *Ring of protection +2*
Spells/day: 2

Familiar: Pitha has a black cat named Phorughpaughs (four paws); he has four white paws (hence his name) and a white chin and bib. His left ear has a V-shaped nick. AC 7; MV 15; HD 1−1; hp 5; #AT 2; D 1-2/1

Spell Book

Level One

Cantrip	*Read Magic*
Identify	*Mending*

Pitha is Oljagg's granddaughter, daughter of his son Kayle. Shortly after the death of Oljagg's wife, their son Kayle returned home after nearly 10 years of adventuring across Faerun. With him was his wife K'lorgin, a gold elf, and their 8-year-old daughter, Pitha.

The young Pitha was rather apprehensive of her grandfather at first because of his unusual appearance. Soon, however, the little girl warmed up to him and they became very close. The mundane life of shopkeepers never appealed to Kayle and K'lorgin. Lured by the tall tales of passing adventurers, and a life of riches and travel, they planned to leave the city. Pitha was only 10, and Oljagg had become very attached to her, refusing to allow her to leave. Tempers flared, and words were spoken harshly—the same situation that caused the headstrong Kayle to leave home the first time years earlier.

But in the end the couple saw the folly of allowing their young daughter to accompany them. Their journeys would be much too long and dangerous for one so young. Pitha was left in her grandfather's care until they returned. As a parting gift, K'lorgin gave Oljagg a gold ring (*ring of protection +2*) to be given to Pitha on her 16th birthday.

The years passed quickly, and Pitha grew to maturity with no word of her wandering parents. Oljagg and Pitha slowly reached an unspoken conclusion that some tragic fate had befallen her parents and they would never be seen again. From that time on, Pitha and Oljagg became more inseparable than ever, each realizing the other was only the family they had left. Pitha lovingly cares for her grandfather, cooking their meals and cleaning their upstairs quarters as best as Oljagg will allow. Oljagg steadfastly refuses to allow her to clean the downstairs area, and claims that the customers have become comfortable with its grimy appearance.

Pitha is pleasant and kind to the twins Esaul and Able, but she's not too sure what to make of them and does not regard them as family. Since her 16th birthday, Pitha has decided to follow in the footsteps of her mother and study magic. She has undertaken an apprenticeship with a local wizard, studying with him in the evenings. Oljagg gladly pays for her schooling, as the spells she learns help around the shop. Always an animal lover, one of her first magical adventures was to use a scroll to attract a familiar, the cat Phorughpaughs. A 4-year-old tom, Phourghpaughs usually can be found curled up on Pitha's bed, or more often, on Oljagg's lap while the old man converses with the daily customers.

The Shop

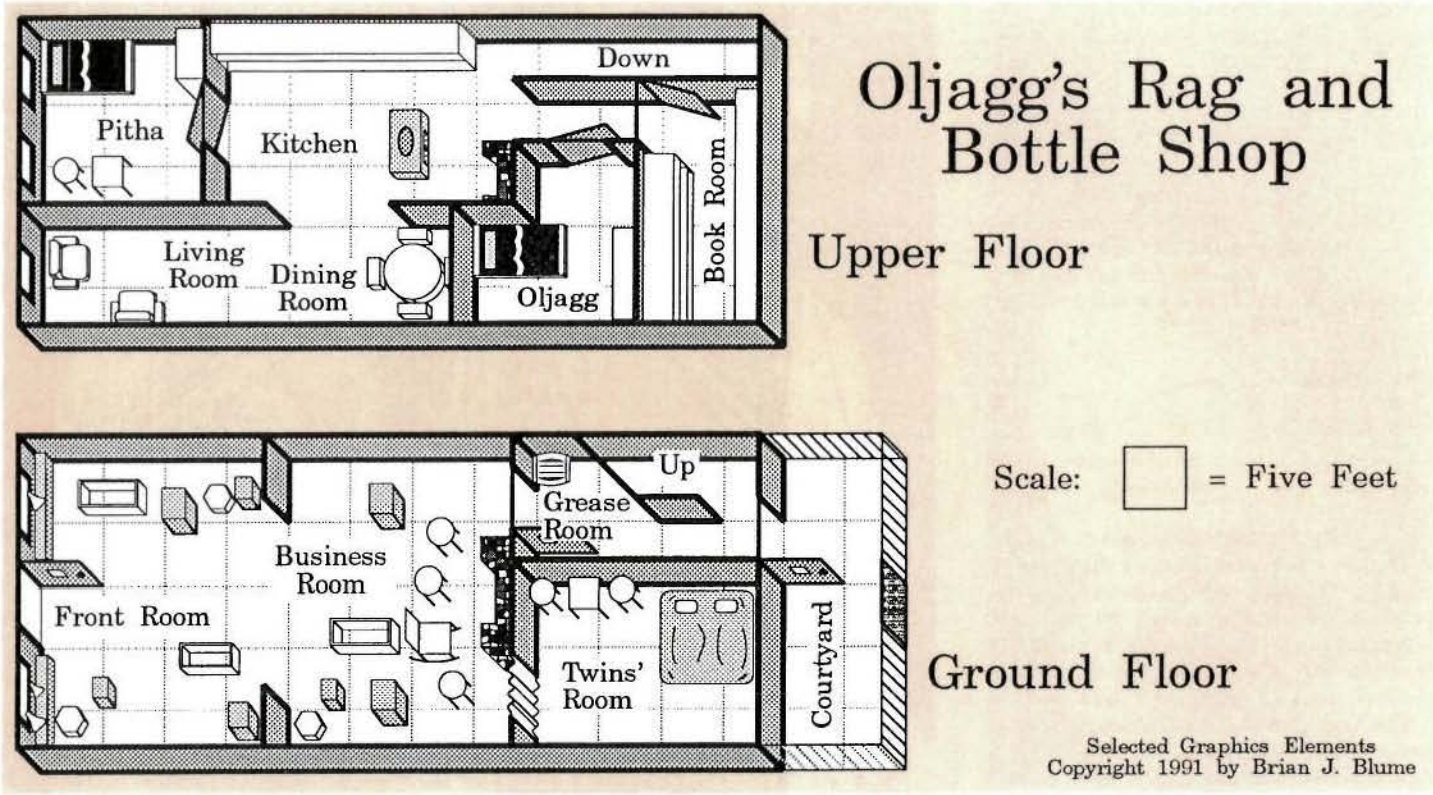
The building is an old one, long and narrow, with a high, pitched roof. The lower floor stone, and the upper floor is whitewashed wood. There are two large windows on either side of the front entrance. The windows are covered with dirt and grease, and full of bottles of every size, shape, and description. There is a splintered wooden sign over the door, its simple lettering reads: "OLJAGG'S."

#1 The Front Room

This room is crammed full of broken furniture, old clothing, and pottery. Dried spices and vegetables hang on the walls. Old paintings of landscapes and portraits in shattered frames hang by the dozens and line the walls. Old cast iron cookware, plates, goblets, and other tableware clutter the floor. Large wooden boxes stuffed full of old rags and other unknown refuse choke every available inch of flat space. The room is smothered with dust and slick with grime, but oddly enough, no mice, rats, or other vermin can be seen.

#2 The Business Room

This room is even more cluttered than the first. It contains more of the same, plus the notable addition of a number of rusty swords, lances, pikes and other weapons. Shields, some bearing the decaying, hand-painted crests of noble families, line the walls. Huge rolls of cobweb-covered carpets are stacked to the ceiling. Tapestries, threadbare with



age, cover the walls. Around the large fireplace in the center of the southern wall is a large rocking chair with three smaller wooden chairs around it.

#3 The Twin's Room

Fairly clean compared to the rest of the shop, this is where the twins call home. It contains a small wooden table and two chairs; a large, straw-stuffed mattress lies on the floor. This room has no door, only a tattered old curtain tacked to the doorframe by several large nails. An aged, ornate frame hangs on the wall with no picture in it. If asked, Oljagg will explain that the twins tell him it is a portrait of their mother.

#4 The Grease Room

Toward the rear of the shop are several large barrels of foul-smelling grease and drippings. Here is stored the refuse that Oljagg sells to the soap and candle makers. The stairs to the upper level are on the eastern wall. The door at the rear of the shop leads to a courtyard.

#5 The Rear Courtyard

This is a narrow strip of land containing all manner of rusting scrap iron and a variety of vermin. A large brown dog roams the area at all times. A gate in the high wooden fence at the rear of the courtyard leads to the back alley and is padlocked at all times.

Upper Level

It is Pitha's responsibility to keep the upper floors clean and orderly, which she does well considering her grandfather's slovenly habits.

#1 The Bookroom

Oljagg always keeps this room locked, and the only key is on a rawhide thong around his neck. Inside this windowless room, running almost the entire length of the rear of the house, are thousands of books. Oljagg does not make the contents of this room general knowledge, and he allows only a select few customers to browse through the collection and make purchases.

#2 The Living Room/Dining Room

This room is sparsely furnished with a heavy oak table and four chairs. In the corner of the room are two well-worn stuffed leather chairs. The room is lit by a forged iron chandelier with four candles.

#3 The Kitchen

The large stone hearth on the back wall dominates this plain, whitewashed room. A few shelves for cookware and foodstuffs, and a small table with a wash basin set into it are all that is in this room.

#4 Pitha's Room

This room is the most clean and orderly in the entire building. There is a large, comfortable bed, a wooden wardrobe, a small writing desk, and a chair. Faded dark green curtains hang in the windows.

#5 Oljagg's Room

This chamber is not as cluttered as the downstairs room, but it's off to a good start. Worn, old clothing is cast carelessly about the room. There is a small straw-stuffed mattress on a rickety wooden slat frame bed, (but with clean sheets), and piles of books. The tattered leather volumes sit in piles and stacks, becoming makeshift tables for a cup of ale or a plate of half-eaten chicken legs. Most everything is covered in a light layer of dust. Oljagg prefers not to have Pitha clean his room, explaining that the dust and grime act as a needed insulator from the cold, damp winters that affect his aching old bones so. ❑

Monstrous Mayhem

Tell Us What Makes This Beast Tick

What can you tell us about this bogeyman from artist James Holloway's pen? Give the creature a name and attributes for any game system that uses monsters.

The Rules

Provide game statistics for the monster. If you are using the AD&D® 2nd Edition game rules, use the format from the various *Monstrous Compendiums.* For other game systems, use the same format the game's publisher uses when presenting monsters.

All entries must be typed (one side of the page only), double spaced, on white paper. Put your name and membership number at the top of the first page, and your name at the top of each subsequent page. You may submit multiple entries, but each entry must be accompanied by a separate *standard disclosure form.* (A sample form appeared in issue 53, and you can get additional forms by sending a SASE to HQ.)

Deadline: All entries must be postmarked by February 10th, 1992.

Winning: Entries will be judged on creativity, playability, and completeness. You may enter as many times as you wish, but you can win only one prize.

Prizes

First Place: A one-year membership extension and an autographed copy of the *Fiend Folio Monstrous Compendium,* which is being written by members of the RPGA™ Network.

Second Place: A six-month membership extension and an autographed copy of the *Fiend Folio Monstrous Compendium.*

Third Place: An autographed copy of the *Fiend Folio Monstrous Compendium.*

In addition, HQ reserves the right to award additional prizes to members who submit entries worthy of honorable mentions. ❑

Martial Arts In Paranoia

Black Belt Clones Are On The Loose

by Ray Gates

Loyal Troubleshooter Kay-G-BEE-3 was in trouble. Before her stood Gengh-I-SKN-5, a known Commie Mutant Traitor. He held a semi-automatic slugthrower in his right hand, pointing it menacingly at her head.

Kay-G had to act fast.

With a movement nearly too quick for the eye to follow, she struck at Gengh-I's hand, catching the Commie Mutant Traitor by surprise and knocking the slugthrower safely out of his reach. Now unarmed, Gengh-I desperately threw a punch at Kay-G, but the loyal Troubleshooter easily blocked his fist. Grabbing Gengh-I by his jumpsuit, she propelled her foot into his stomach and rolled backward, throwing Gengh-I over her and sending him crashing to the floor.

Picking herself up, Kay-G strode over to where Gengh-I had landed. Pulling out her Com-Unit, she reported that the traitor had been subdued and called for the Traitor Dispatch Team to deal with him.

Martial arts in Paranoia can be exciting. They make close-quartered combat more deadly and more fun by adding new unarmed and melee weapons skills to a clone's repertoire of abilities.

Martial Art Skills

Several skills are mandatory when including martial arts in Paranoia. The first of these is called the "Martial Art Level." This falls under the Melee Combat section of the Basics Tree. Martial arts begins at Level 1, which costs three skill points.

A clone must first take Basics (1), then Melee Combat (2), before he can add Martial Art Level 1 (3). These levels continue up to Martial Art Level 5, which costs seven skill points. Each level gained reveals new and deadlier unarmed skills to the clone student.

Weapon skills are also taught. To gain the use of a special martial arts weapon, a clone must first take Basics (1), Melee Combat (2), and the new skill Martial Art Weaponry (3). The clone can then acquire special weapons skills, each of which begins at skill level 4—for example, Nunchuku (4). Any clone may train with martial art weapons, but unless they are also being instructed in martial arts, they suffer a −10% combat penalty. For example, a clone who is skilled with melee weapons may learn to use the nunchuku. However, if that clone does not know martial arts, he is subject to the −10% penalty.

The other necessary skills are physical, and they are listed under Self Improvement of the Personal Development Skill Tree. They represent special physical attributes, not all of which are combat orientated. Each skill has a level of 3—for example, Acrobatics (3).

Martial Art Styles

Many styles can be learned within Alpha Complex. However, most are taught illegally and are therefore treasonous. Each style is different, as it emphasizes distinct skills. Some edify inner peace and tranquility (mostly the treasonous ones), while others simply instruct clones in cracking skulls. Some masters charge for their tutorage, assessing fees that range from virtually nothing to staggering prices.

Further, some styles are restricted in security clearance. Below are some of the more common styles known within Alpha Complex.

Computerjutsu

This was the first martial art style introduced in Alpha Complex. While searching through a long forgotten memory bank, The Computer discovered some Old Reckoning documents (namely copies of *Black Belt, Inside Karate,* and *Australasian Fighting Arts*) containing a form of primitive combat technique. Upon further examination, The Computer determined these skills could be effectively used in Alpha Complex so loyal citizens could combat the Commie menace.

The Computer elected an IntSec goon, Chuck-Y-NRS-4, to learn these skills and then pass them on to citizens in Alpha Complex.

Chuck was successful with his teachings and has since been promoted to Indigo level. He currently schools Troubleshooters in Computerjutsu.

To train in Computerjutsu, a clone must be of Red security clearance or higher, and must pay a fee of 20 credits for each Martial Art Level gained.

The following skills are taught by this martial art style:

Level 1: punch, front kick
Level 2: knife hand, side kick
Level 3: tiger claw, forward hurl
Level 4: jumping side kick, spinning hurl

Armed Forces Self Defense Course (A.F.S.D.C.)

With the introduction of Computerjutsu, the Armed Forces were quick to include martial arts in their standard training.

After attaining the highest level of Computerjutsu, Vulture Squad Leader Jack-I-CHN-3 developed additional techniques.

This new style was initially restricted to Armed Forces Personnel. However, once The Computer saw how effective the style appeared in practice, it decided to make the new skills available to those of higher clearance—and for a higher fee.

To train in this style of martial arts, a clone must be of Orange security clearance or higher and pay a fee of 80 credits for each Martial Art Level gained. Members of the Armed Forces are still restricted by clearance, but they do not have to pay the 80 credit fee.

The following skills are taught by this martial art style:

Level 1: punch, front kick
Level 2: palm strike, forward throw
Level 3: spear hand, side kick, forward hurl
Level 4: iron fist, crescent kick, spinning hurl
Level 5: bone shattering strike

Alpha-Do

This style was developed for the elite forces of Alpha Complex, in particular select Vulture Squads and Troubleshooters. This is one of the more powerful, legal martial arts. It is taught by former Troubleshooter Kungef-U-MAN-5, the only clone to ever master all the

skills of Alpha-Do. It is rumored that Kungef-U owes his amazing martial arts skills to a mutant power. A few years ago a Troubleshooter team was called in to investigate this mutant allegation. The team mysteriously disappeared. Since Troubleshooter teams mysteriously disappear all the time, The Computer thought nothing more of the subject.

Although it does not cost anything to study Alpha-Do, to learn the skills legally, a clone must belong to one of the elite forces within Alpha Complex and must be of security clearance Yellow or higher.

The following skills are taught by this martial art style:

Level 1: punch, front kick, forward throw

Level 2: palm strike, crescent kick, forward hurl

Level 3: tiger claw, splits kick, backward roll throw

Level 4: jumping side kick, great inside hurl

Level 5: bone shattering strike, nerve touch

The Way Of The Ber-U-SLE-6

This illegal style is taught by the traitorous Secret Society—Disciples of the deceased Ber-U-SLE-6. Little is publicly known about this style or its students. However, rumors indicate that society members are searching for the clone who killed Ber-U-SLE-6. Ber-U was supposedly the greatest martial artist within Alpha Complex.

To learn the style, clones simply have to join the Disciples of Ber-U-SLE-6. This process is said to involve taking certain tests, which are deadly if failed.

The style teaches the following skills:

Level 1: punch, palm strike, front kick, forward throw

Level 2: tiger claw, side kick, backward roll throw

Level 3: iron fist, crescent kick, spinning hurl

Level 4: splits kick, jumping side kick, great inside hurl

Level 5: nerve touch, one-inch punch

Unarmed Techniques

The following describes unarmed moves and the damage they cause. The damage column is listed after the style in parenthesis.

Punch (3): This is a simple, straightforward punch.

Palm Strike (4): This is an open-hand attack in which the martial artist clone strikes the opponent with the open palm of his hand.

Knife/Spear Hand (5): This strike is accomplished with the hand open and the fingers straight and rigid. The knife hand strikes with the side of the hand, while the spear hand strikes with the tips of the fingers.

Tiger Claw (5): This strike is performed with the fingers rigid and bent to form the shape of a claw.

Iron Fist (6): This is similar to a punch, except that through rigorous training, the martial artist clone has hardened his fist so it seems as hard as iron.

Front Kick (4): This is a forward kick, striking with the ball of the foot.

Side Kick (5): Similar to a front kick, this assault is performed by first twisting the torso to the side, then kicking out. This puts more power in the kick.

Crescent Kick (6): To perform this kick, the martial artist clone sweeps his leg around and up, usually bringing it crashing into the side of an opponent's head.

Splits Kick (6): This technique allows the clone to attack Commie Mutant Traitors on either side of him. It is performed by jumping into the air while at the same time kicking out on both sides.

Jumping Side Kick (7): Similar to a normal side kick, this attack lets the clone run for at least three meters before leaping into the air and completing the kick.

Forward Throw (4): The attacker grabs a Commie Mutant Traitor by the arm or clothing and throws the traitor over his shoulder.

Forward Hurl (5): This is similar to the forward throw, except the opponent is hurled into another object, usually a wall or other hard, immovable object. The opponent also can be hurled into another clone, preventing the opponent and target clone from taking any action for the next round while they untangle themselves.

Backward Roll Throw (6): This throw is performed by grabbing the opponent's clothing, placing the foot on the target's stomach or chest, then rolling backward, throwing the opponent by kicking out with a leg.

Spinning Hurl (6): This is similar to a forward hurl, except the attacking clone spins around several times to gain momentum.

Great Inside Hurl (7): Also similar to a forward hurl, this technique lets the attacker twist his body after the opponent has been grabbed, bringing the opponent behind them. The attacking clone then uses one of his legs to assist in throwing the opponent.

Bone Shattering Strike (8): Clones must study skeletal structure to accomplish this. The maneuver is performed by clasping both hands together and striking the opponent with great force.

Nerve Touch (9): A clone who can use this technique is familiar with the nervous system, knowing which points on the body to strike to cause pain or death. The attacker merely has to press his fingers on a nerve point to cause damage. This technique does not work if the opponent is wearing armor.

One-Inch Punch (10): This is an extremely dangerous strike. To be most effective, the punch must be executed one inch from the opponent, forcing the attacker to be at close range. The attacking clone summons all his strength into his fist, expelling that energy when he strikes his target. The energy sends destructive vibrations through the opponent's body—in extreme cases causing death by tearing the opponent's organs apart.

Martial Art Weapons

Weapons are an important part of martial art instruction. A clone must achieve at least Martial Art Level 2 before he is taught any weapon skills. Computerjutsu does not employ weapons. Below is a list of weapons used by martial artist clones, the damage column, and the styles that include the weapons.

Weapon	Dmg	Used By
Brass Knuckles	6	AFSDC
Knife	7	AFSDC
Club	8	AFSDC
Sword	9	Alpha-Do, Bur-U-SLE-6
Neurowhip	10	AFSDC, Alpha-Do
Force Sword	12	AFSDC, Alpha-Do
Throwing Knife	7	AFSDC, Alpha-Do, Ber-U-SLE-6
Throwing Stars	4	Alpha-Do, Ber-U-SLE-6
Kama	8	Alpha-Do, Ber-U-SLE-6
Tonfa	8	AFSDC, Alpha-Do, Ber-U-SLE-6

Sai	7	Ber-U-SLE-6
Nunchuku	8	AFSDC, Alpha-Do, Ber-U-SLE-6
3-Section-Staff	9	Alpha-Do, Ber-U-SLE-6
Bo Staff	9	Alpha-Do, Ber-U-SLE-6
Jo Staff	7	AFSDC, Alpha-Do, Ber-U-SLE-6
Whip Chain	7	Ber-U-SLE-6
Crescent Knife	8	Alpha-Do, Ber-U-SLE-6
Spear	8	Alpha-Do, Ber-U-SLE-6
Halberd	9	Ber-U-SLE-6

Weapon Descriptions

Throwing Stars: These star-shaped blades are 2" to 3" in diameter and are designed to wound an opponent rather than kill him. They are thrown at an opponent in much the same way a knife would be thrown.

Kama: This is a straight, 2' long handle made from dura-plastik and fitted at one end with a 6"-to 8"-long curved blade.

Tonfa: This appears as a truncheon with handles sticking out at right angles. It can be used by striking with the handle or by swinging the truncheon part around by a handle.

Sai: This thin-bladed knife has two short prongs, one on either side of the blade. Its primary use is to catch other weapons, breaking the weapons or disarming the opponent. When being used to disarm, roll to hit normally counting a successful hit as entrapping the weapon. Roll damage normally, counting a wound as disarming the opponent or breaking the weapon.

Nunchuku: This looks like two 1-foot-long truncheons connected by a length of chain or syntherope. It is used by holding one end while striking with the other.

3-Section-Staff: Similar to a nunchuku, this weapon has a third handle. Each truncheon-like handle is 2-to 3-feet long. The weapon is used like a nunchuku, but it is more difficult to master.

Bo Staff: This is a thin pole, approximately 6-feet long, which is made of duraplastik. The attacker can strike with either end, keeping opponents at a distance.

Jo Staff: A shorter version of the bo staff, this weapon is about 3 feet long.

Whip Chain: This weapon consists of a short handle from which protrudes 10 to 12 pieces of thin, sharp metal connected by metal or duraplastic links. The metal lacerates opponents, and it is capable of entangling them. When an opponent is successfully struck with the weapon, any hit of wound status or above indicates the opponent is injured—plus that body part is entangled and cannot be freed without the help of another person. It takes one round to remove the whip chain from an opponent, although the attacker can do it instantaneously by flicking the whip chain away so it disentangles itself.

Crescent Knife: This consists of a crescent-shaped blade attached to a small duraplastik handle.

Spear: Similar to a bo staff, this weapon has a small, sharp blade on one end.

Halberd: This looks like a bo staff, but has a large, axe-like blade attached to one end.

Physical Skills

The following is a list of skills available to those studying various martial art disciplines.

Skill	Discipline	Martial Art Level
Block	All	Level 1
Meditation	All	Level 1
Disarm	AFSDC	Level 2
	Alpha-Do	
	Ber-U-SLE-6	
Blind Fighting	Alpha-Do	Level 2
	Ber-U-SLE-6	
Acrobatics	Alpha-Do	Level 3
	Ber-U-SLE-6	Level 2
Iron Skin	Ber-U-SLE-6	Level 3
Paired Weapons	AFSDC	Level 3
	Alpha-Do	Level 2
	Ber-U-SLE-6	Level 2

Physical Skills

Below are descriptions of skills related to martial arts. There are no bonuses or penalties applied to these skills. Characters do not need to make a skill roll to use them, as once learned, the skills are a part of a clone's physical abilities.

Block: This is standard training with all martial arts. Opponents striking hand-to-hand at a clone who possesses this skill suffer a −10% modifier. A block does not provide a defense against weapons.

Meditation: By meditating for an hour, a clone will feel as if he had a full day-cycle of rest. Fatigue is expelled, leaving the clone feeling refreshed. While meditating, a clone feels neither hunger nor thirst.

Disarm: This is the ability to disarm an opponent who is attacking with a hand-held weapon. A clone practicing this ability can elect to disarm an opponent by stating this is his intent during an attack. For example, a clone decides he will use a crescent kick against his opponent to disarm him rather than to cause injury. If the clone rolls a wound status or higher, the opponent has been successfully disarmed.

Blind Fighting: By training in dark rooms and with blindfolds, the clone has learned to anticipate attacks that he cannot see. This allows him to attack in darkness without penalty.

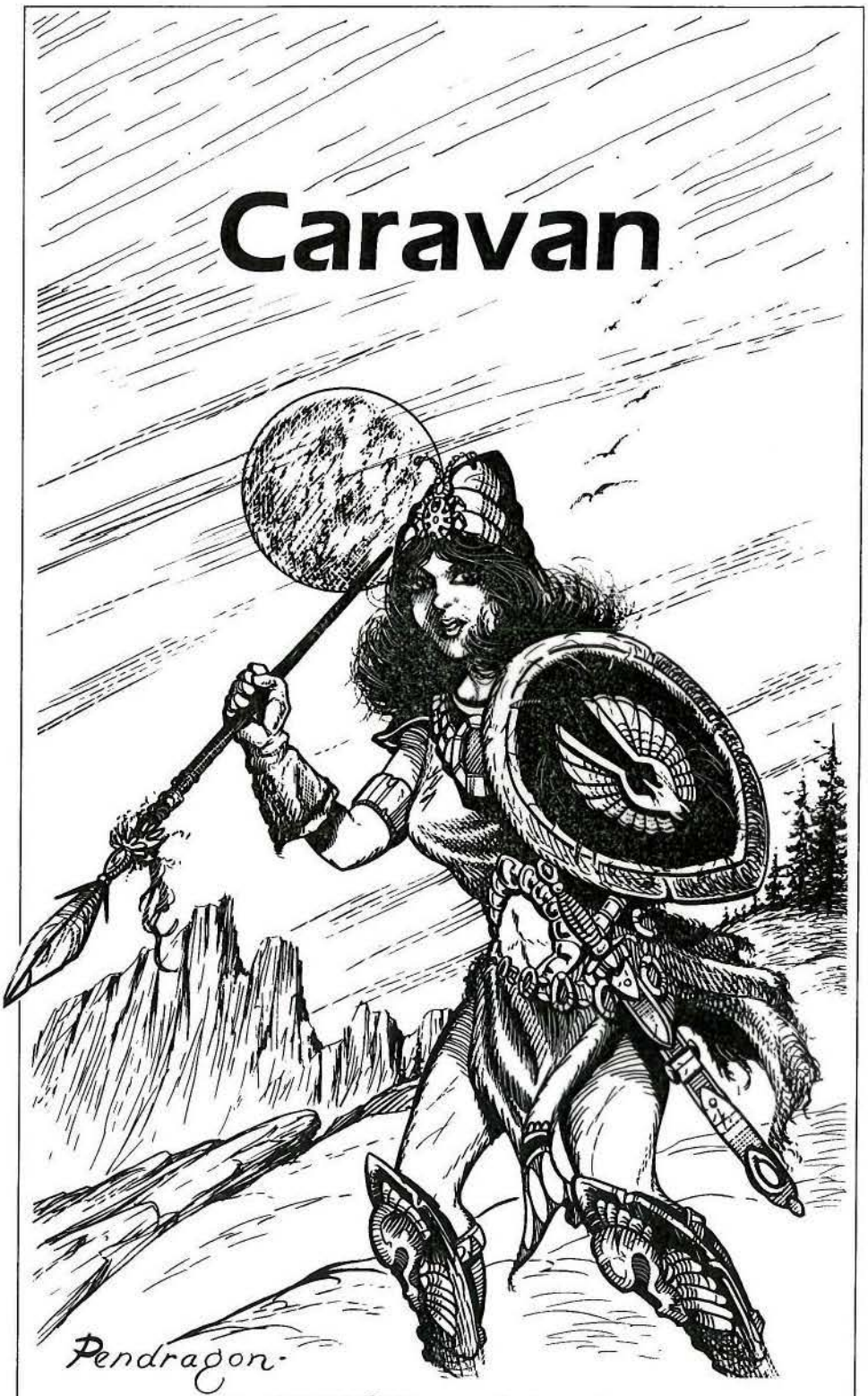
Acrobatics: This is the ability to perform acrobatic feats such as backflips, cartwheels, etc. This can be used to close the distance with an opponent. It also can be used to dodge, making attacks against the clone at −30%. A clone practicing this ability must be able to move freely and cannot wear bulky armor.

Iron Skin: Through rigorous training, the clone has toughened himself so he feels less pain from physical blows and from blunt weapons. When being attacked by unarmed methods, damage against a clone is rolled two columns to the left. For example, a clone with iron skin is hit with a palm strike. Rather than roll damage on column 4, damage is rolled on column 2. This ability does not protect a clone from bladed or aimed weapons.

Paired Weapons: The clone has learned to use two weapons at the same time, making a separate "to hit" roll for each. Only melee weapons can be paired. Weapons that can be used include: brass knuckles, all knives, kama, tonfa, sai, nunchuku, jo staff, and throwing stars.

❑

Caravan



An AD&D® Game Adventure for 5-8 characters of levels 1-2

by James M. Ward

Adventure Background

The characters are on their way to Ravens Bluff, the Living City. To get there, they have joined a caravan, believing it safer than making the trip alone across unfamiliar territory.

Several encounters in this adventure are staged events designed strictly to provide color and tension; their outcomes are predetermined, but the DM should not reveal this. It is the DM's responsibility to present these events to the players in a dramatic and entertaining manner.

Players' Introduction

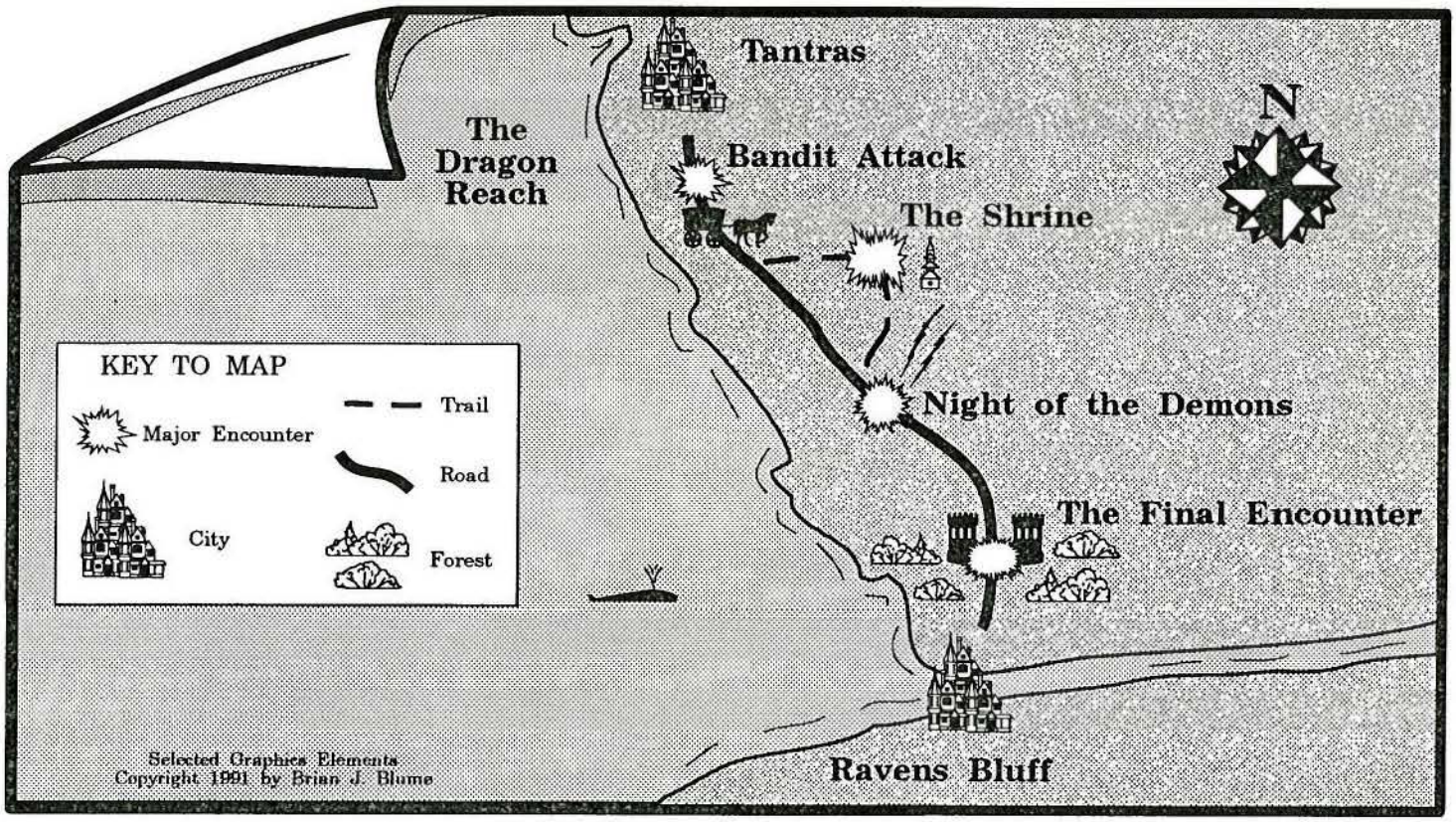
Ravens Bluff, the Living City, that is where you are going. It should take less than a week to get there, especially in the company of this caravan. The group of wagons likely will go by way of Tantras on The Dragon Reach, which is just north of Ravens Bluff.

The caravan is lead by Kantal Kantinole, a brave paladin who is going to the Living City to start a new temple. He is a veteran of many combats, so you feel safe with him. He has cautioned you, however, that someone may be after him. "So keep your head down and stay out of the way if too much trouble starts," he advises. Kantal also intends to make a short side trip to an isolated shrine, probably to secure a blessing for his temple.

Kantal is a tall, proud man of middle age. He has a very commanding presence and has attracted several other adventurers to the caravan. You are very glad to travel in Kantal's company, especially since hearing rumors about the death of D'war Ghee, a mysterious spellcaster from the east who reputedly was torn to bits by wandering tanar'ri. Since then, so the rumor goes, certain travelers on the road south have been plagued with D'war Ghee's curse—vague premonitions about the future. Worse than that, the tanar'ri, if they exist at all, still are at large.

Also with the caravan are:

* Stenius, a mysterious merchant who apparently adventured for many years. Stenius usually keeps to him-



self, but seems willing to talk if approached. He is very business-minded.

* Anton, the wizard. You have not seen his power demonstrated. But if he is half as mighty as he claims, he surely must be a force to fear.

* Tarten, the fighter, is a bit of a rogue. He never dresses well, but his blades are always clean and polished. He doesn't go out of his way to be friendly, but he has never refused a good conversation or a handshake.

* Del Sonora and Adominus, the female and male clerics, respectively, are perhaps the friendliest of the crew. They conduct regular services and seek out the companionship of your group and others in the caravan. Unfortunately, you've heard they charge for healing spells.

* Lance and Thorin are fighters with a few years' experience under their sword belts. They are quick to start up a game of chance, are friendly, and often share their ale.

* Hoarthgar, the barbarian, keeps with the fighters. He avoids Anton whenever possible. You get along with him all right. As a matter of fact, he is heading your direction now.

"Watch it. Stenius is upset. I'd stay away from him if I were you. He's ranting again. But if he rants too much he isn't going to have a head to rant with," Hoarthgar says as he puts his hand on his battle axe and stomps away.

Before you have time to react, you see Stenius approach. He is red-faced and is waving his fist in the air. "Robbed! I tell you I've been robbed. I insist we search every wagon, every saddlebag, every person in this caravan until I find my gold. I will not tolerate thievery. I joined up with this caravan to be safe. I would have been better off to go alone. Then there wouldn't have been anyone around to swipe anything.

"Hey you," he shouts, indicating your group. "Check your stuff now. Make sure it's all there. Maybe I should check it for you in case you have more than you came into this caravan with."

Stenius proceeds to examine the PCs' belongings—if they let him. Otherwise, he storms off to inspect the NPCs' possessions.

The Robbery

During the entire first day, Stenius continues to rant, rave, and shout that someone in the party has stolen almost all of his gold.

Stenius is lying about the theft and is attempting to make others believe there is a thief about so he will appear blameless when others notice items missing. Stenius is the real thief.

The Dream

The first night the PCs all have the same dream. They see a vision of Anton dying horribly with 30 arrows sticking out of his body. They also dream that Tarten has his head chopped off in a bloody battle. D'war Ghee's curse is real, and it is affecting them. The curse will continue to plague travelers on the road until the tanar'ri who slew him are slain or banished back the Abyss. The PCs will have a chance to do this in the Night of the Fiends encounter (see below).

If the PCs attempt to tell the NPCs about any dream, they are laughed at. No one believes the dreams have any significance.

Bandit Attack

Late in the morning after your dream, dust rises from the terrain east of the caravan. There is no wind, so whatever is causing the dust is a mystery.

The caravan members slow the wagons, circle them, and ready their weapons. Kantal suggests you get in the center of the circle and "keep your heads down."

Within a few moments you note what is causing the dust storm. It is many men on horseback. They are riding forward, weapons drawn. They appear to be bandits.

If the party goes to the center of the circle, they will not take any damage, and the tough NPCs will quickly dispatch the bandits. If the party tries to help with the fight, run combat normally.

Bandits (50): Int Average; AL NE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 or 1-6; SZ M; ML 13; XP 35 each.

Bandit Leader (1): Int Average; AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 4; hp 38; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 or 1-6; SZ M; ML 15; XP 120.

All the bandits are armed with long swords and short composite bows.

All of the NPCs fight in the battle, but the caravan guards do most of the work. Make the battle sound perilous, with bandits everywhere and large flights of arrows raining down on the party. In the end, however, all of the bandits are killed.

During the course of the battle, the wizard Anton dies bravely. He takes many arrows in the chest after successfully blasting a group of bandits with a *fireball.* The wizard's magic items are divided among the caravan. The player characters get Anton's *scarab of protection;* Kantal tells them it has three or four charges left.

Also toward the end of the battle a wagoneer dies of a heart attack in Del Senora's arms. With his last breath he prays the young adventurers will take his wagon to the Living City and deliver it to a certain address. He offers all its contents to the group if they will only deliver the wagon.

If the party agrees, they find six long boxes in the wagon; each box is made of a rare wood:

Box one: Black Oak, 4′ long by 3′ wide. The box is half-filled with black earth, and there are five *potions of healing* in delicate glass bottles hidden in the earth.

Box two: Teak, 5′ long by 2′ wide. The box is half-filled with an earth/sand mixture. There are 11 small oil paintings of lovely undead females. The paintings look pretty good, but they are worth only 1d10 sp each.

Box three: Purple Sandalwood, 6′ long by 4′ wide. This box is half-filled with black earth, and there are 19 well-made chalices imbeded in it. Each chalice has a different castle scene etched on the side. Each chalice is worth 200 gp.

Box four: Natural ironwood, 4′ long by 3′ wide. This box's lid is a piece of carved plaster showing a series of ancient pictograms. The story they tell is of a brave prince who died at an early age of a blood sickness. A successful *read languages* roll by a thief or a *comprehend languages* spell reveals the story. The box contains a large collection of ancient toys, worth 15-20 gp each to a collector.

Box five: Black oak, 4′ long by 5′ wide. The box is half filled with black dirt, and in the dirt is a collection of 500 copper coins. If the coins are scratched, the copper rubs off to reveal platinum coins.

Box six: Natural sandalwood, 6′ feet long by 3′ wide. When this box is opened, an unearthly spectral mist rises from the interior, accompanied by an eerie moaning sound. The bottom of the box is covered by a layer of foul-smelling dust. The mist, moaning, and dust all are harmless magical effects.

The wagon itself is made of strange, ebony wood and is extremely light for its size. The wood cannot be cut, but the full force of a mace blow can create a small dent. When magical detections of any type are used on the wagon each one detects a void where the wagon should be.

On the first day the group searches the wagon they do not find any type of secret compartments, but if they search on any other day they find a hidden panel that covers an extra-dimensional space the same size as a *portable hole* (a cylinder 6′ in diameter and 10′ deep). This space is the lair of a vampire, who, like the PCs, is traveling to the Living City. The extra-dimensional space cannot be removed from the wagon without destroying both it and the wagon.

Vampire (1): Int Exceptional; AL CE; AC 1; MV 12, Fl 18 (C); HD 8+3; hp 37; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 5-10; SA Energy drain, gaze causes *charm* save at −2, can shapechange to bat, wolf, or gaseous form at will, summon rats, wolves, or bats; SD +1 or better magical weapon to hit, immune to sleep, charm, hold, poison, and paralysis, half damage from cold or electricity, regenerates 3 points per melee round; SZ M; ML 16; XP 3,000.

When found, the vampire will try to *charm* his attackers starting with the most powerful characters; he commands *charmed* victims to attack (or at least restrain) the others.

If the PCs find the vampire during the day, they can destroy him just by opening the wagon to the light of the sun.

Until found, the vampire appears each night to drink blood, but he tries not kill anyone or drain levels, as he wants a safe, steady supply of blood until he reaches the city. If detected, the vampire uses his *charm* and shape changing abilities to evade pursuit.

The Robbery Part II

The night after the bandit attack, Kantal says your group has guard duty. You're responsible for one section of the caravan.

Answer the players' questions, and get them to set up a watch schedule. During the night one or more PCs who were on guard fall asleep, and one of them has all his gold stolen. Stenius has used a *sleep* spell on the PCs and randomly picked one to steal from. In the morning, Stenius just as loudly proclaims again that everyone should have their things looked at. However, if the PCs do not announce the theft, Stenius will claim to have been robbed of a few silver chains. The NPCs will vote against any search. Stenius tries this trick twice more during the trip.

Hoarthgar And The Sting

The next day, Hoarthgar shows the PCs some land grants for pieces of Ravens Bluff that he will happily sell for 100 gp each. He talks to the PCs all day and tries to get them to buy these grants. Each grant is special in its own way and sounds attractive—land next to the mayor's palace, land next to the arena, land on the beach, etc.

All of these grants are fake and use-

less, but look quite real. If and when the PCs search Hoarthgar's things they discover many more fake deeds.

That night the PCs dream of an NPC dying horribly at the fangs of a huge black dragon. If the PCs try to convince the NPCs, no one believes the dreams are important.

Dreams of Death

During the third night all of the PCs dream that the caravan members die in attacks from the sky.

On the next day, when the party has stopped for the midday meal and Kantal is visiting his shrine, the characters are surprised when fire beetles spring from the ground.

Naturally, the NPCs will pay no attention to the warnings that the PCs might want to give. In fact, after the battle several of the NPCs will quite rightly point out that the PCs' dreams were wrong and the caravan members didn't get threatened from the sky, but from the ground.

Hoarthgar becomes particularly upset if the PCs have been spouting off about their dreams; he will begin to accuse a few of the player characters of being witches, since no one else seems to have these dreams of death. He suggests abandoning the characters or tying them up so the dreams can get them. None of the other caravan members, however, will go along with this. Hoarthgar will have nothing to do with the characters after this.

Fire Beetles (3): Int Low; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 1+2; hp 7, 5, 4; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ S; ML 12; XP 35 each.

When the fire beetles appear, only the PCs are close enough to attack them, and it will take the NPCs two rounds to join the melee.

The night after the fire beetle attack, all the PCs dream of Kantal getting ripped apart from some type of dragon creature that comes out of the sky. If any of them tell the NPCs, most of them scoff at the idea. However, Hoarthgar will believe them and leave the caravan.

The Night of the Fiends

When you awake from your terrible dreams, the morning sun is shrouded in dark clouds, and there is an odd green lightning flashing in the sky. The cleric Del Senora becomes agitated and begins throwing several spells. She announces that everyone will be in terrible danger when the sun sets. Adominus begins working feverishly on the ground tracing out huge star patterns on the road. He says that all who stay in the patterns will be safe for the night. These patterns are easily large enough to handle all the horses and your wagon.

Throughout the day Adominus works on his patterns. If the PCs think of running, the cleric tells them there is no escape. All during this time Del Senora refuses to come close to the patterns. She maintains she will not go inside, and because of this Kantal the paladin decides to remain outside the protections as well. Kantal will now approach the party:

"I am sought by an evil priest who seeks to destroy me because I have thwarted his plans for the past many years. I did not believe he would attack in this manner, sending his fiendish minions. He is powerful, and he may destroy us all.

"I believe Adominus's patterns will protect everyone here. And I trust you will stay within the patterns. I must remain out here to protect Del Senora. Do not leave the patterns.

"If I fall, wait until morning to head to Ravens Bluff. Take my body, and the body of Del Senora if she, too, falls. We will be raised by friends. You have acted bravely for adventurers so young."

With this he leaves and begins to talk to Del Senora.

The green lightning flashes brighter and brighter all day long. As the sun sets a new, dark line appears on the horizon and all too soon you can recognize a horde of fiends flying down on the group. There must be hundreds of the evil creatures, and the sizes range from man-sized to one that must be 40 feet tall.

It is not necessary to detail the evil priest involved, as he does not appear in this adventure. Nor is it necessary to detail the fiends (assorted tanar'ri), as the NPCs will deal with them. The PCs play a secondary, but important role in this encounter.

Del Sonora will not retreat to the patterns, as she believes evil should be met head-on, even if her own life is in jeopardy. The patterns keep out the tanar'ri, as they generate a *protection from evil* effect; however, this does not keep out undead.

The tanar'ri are here to scare the stuffings out of the party. The scene should go something like this:

1. The monsters fly down from the skies, and Adominus's patterns begin to give off blood red sparks. The creatures initially ignore Del, Kantal, and any PCs who might have stayed with them. For the first few minutes the tanar'ri try to blast their way into the patterns with magic and physical force—all to no avail. Then they turn to attack Del and Kantal.

2. Some of the smaller monsters notice the outside group, while the other monsters batter away at the magical patterns. The patterns begin to show some strain. Green lightning bolts flash from the patterns at the tanar'ri, and cracks in the pattern lines appear and start growing. The lesser tanar'ri begin fighting everyone on the outside. If there are PCs out there, they should be hard pressed but take only slight damage (1d8 each), because most of the monsters are more interested in getting pieces of Del and Kantal. The two NPCs outside melee the tanar'ri and drive a few away. The NPCs inside attack the horde fiends with spells and missile weapons, except for Lance and Thorin, who rush out to melee the retreating Tanar'ri. Unfortunately, Lance and Thorin are promptly torn to shreds.

3. Skeletons and zombies march into the area. Adominus asks the PCs to take care of these minor undead, while he concentrates on the patterns. The skeletons and zombies can step through the patterns.

Skeletons (17): Int Non; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 4 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (weapon); SD half damage from type P or S weapons, immune to fear, cold, sleep, charm, hold, and death spells; SZ M; ML Special; XP 65 each.

Zombies (8): Int Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 7 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA Always lose initiative; SD fear, cold, sleep, charm, hold, and death spells; SZ M; ML Special; XP 65 each.

4. Del begins casting spells and slays several tanar'ri, but she is knocked unconscious by a large tanar'ri. Any PCs outside the pattern are likewise knocked unconscious.

5. The PCs inside the protective pattern should be encouraged to rescue Del and the rest of the characters outside the pattern. They should know that Del has fallen near the pattern, and if some diversion could be arranged maybe there is a chance Del can be pulled in.

If the group isn't buying this and doesn't want to go out, Adominus tells them that if something isn't done soon the tanar'ri will shatter the patterns. If the group still isn't interested, eventually the tanar'ri break in. If this happens, some PCs might escape by hiding in the extra-dimensional space in the wagon. Adominus is too busy maintaining the patterns to do anything else, and the other NPCs aren't about to risk their necks "for that fool Del Sonora."

If Del is saved, the protective magics she casts help fortify the magic of the pattern, preventing the tanar'ri from getting in. The monsters try several tactics to get characters outside the pattern, but the fiends are finally forced to leave.

The Challenge

The next morning, your fifth day on the trail, what's left of your party continues along the road and into the path of three huge men who are dressed like thieves. They challenge Kantal to a life and death battle. He talks terms with them and then comes back and offers the rest of the party great rewards if any of them will fight with him.

All of the remaining NPCs refuse—after seeing the hordes of tanar'ri they have no stomach for taking on any more of Kantal's enemies. If any of the PCs go for the deal, Kantal gives each one a scroll tube. Each tube's contents is up to the DM, but here are some suggestions:

* A letter of introduction which will gain the bearer recognition (and perhaps assistance from an important Ravens Bluff resident or official, such as Lord Mayor Charles Oliver O'Kane, Chief Prelate Sirrus Melandor, or Lady Lauren DeVillars, a powerful noblewoman.
* A map showing the location of a large treasure which is hidden in Sarbreen, the ruined underground city that lies below Ravens Bluff.
* A scroll with a valuable spell.

When the battle begins the PCs discover the enemy is using poisoned weapons. The PCs are free to withdraw from the fight, but most likely will succumb to the poison anyway. If this happens, Del Sonora drags them to safety and *neutralizes* the poison—for free this time.

Once again, the foes in this encounter are just window dressing—the real test for the PCs here is whether they have the courage to stand by Kantal. For game purposes, the thieves have a THAC0 of 15 when fighting the PCs, they are armed with short swords coated with a paralytic venom that causes a save vs. poison at −3. If the save fails, the victim loses 1d10 hit points each round until he is reduced to one hit point—the venom does not kill and *cannot* reduce a victim to zero hit points or less. Victims reduced to one hit point are paralyzed for 1d4 + 1 days.

Kantal slays two of the thieves, and kills the last one as he is slain himself.

Del doesn't have the power to resurrect Kantal or any slain PC. However, she vows to take Kantal's body to friends in Ravens Bluff who will raise him and "his gallant comrades." She comforts the PCs:

"The road to Ravens Bluff really isn't dangerous, but Kantal attracted trouble on this trip because of his last go-round with an evil priest. I don't know the priest's name, but I think we'll not hear from him again this trip, since both the tanar'ri and the thieves have been defeated. The priest might not even know Kantal has fallen.

"I realize now that you would have been much safer traveling alone, but what is past, is past. Some great good force must have been watching over you for you to have survived when seasoned warriors fell. Come, let me heal your wounds—no charge—and please stay on guard so I can sleep, pray, and regain fresh spells."

If the PCs agree to stand guard while she sleeps, Del heals them completely.

The Last Dream

The curse of D'war Ghee is fading, but it's still potent enough to give the PCs one more vague warning about what is in store for them. The night after the challenge, each PC dreams that the group has arrived in front of the gates of the Living City, but a lovely woman in red comes to them and stabs each of them with a red dagger. Then a kindly old man dressed in green bashes each of them on the head, forcing them to crawl on hands and knees. Next, a giant dressed in blue picks them up and throws them miles farther from their destination. Finally, a black cloud covers their bodies, and they are forced into the land of the unliving forever.

The Final Encounter

Your group comes over a small hill and you see a forested plain. Down the road about two miles is a pair of towers, which obviously defend the road. There are several men in front of them, presumably gate guards. Several bright banners fly from the towers. Behind the towers is a huge forest, and the road continues past them.

There is nothing stopping the PCs from entering the forest, going around the towers, and finding the road again. If they do this tell them the adventure is over and they have successfully completed the quest to reach Ravens Bluff, as the city lies just beyond the woods.

However, if the party goes to the tower they face a set of fired Ravens Bluff watchmen who can easily determine the party is a bunch of hicks who have never been to the city before:

"Ho!" shouts an unkempt guard as you near the tower. "Stop right there good folks. You've reached the great port of Ravens Bluff, which lies just beyond those trees. Of course, entry into the city isn't allowed without the proper permit, and since I see that you have no such permits, I'm afraid the law says I must confiscate half of everything you have before I allow you to pass."

If the party pays this outrageous toll without complaint, another guard steps forward and demands half of what they have left. If the PCs pay again, the "guards" let them pass. If the PCs look to the NPCs for advice, they sarcastically tell the PCs and the guards that they are pilgrims and therefore immune to tolls and permit requirements, and the "guards" will happily comply if they wind up with three quarters of the PCs'

loot. The guards attack to kill if the PCs refuse to pay at any point.

Each tower holds five archers, and these fire from arrow slits. The doors to the towers are barred. There are five gate guards outside the towers.

"Guards" (15): Int Average; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg By weapon; SD +5 AC bonus when using arrow slits; SZ M; ML 11; XP 35 each.

The "guards" are armed with long swords and short bows.

Stenius, if he's still with the group, flees into the trees if a fight breaks out; he intends to abandon the party. Tarten charges after the coward. If the DM is feeling generous, and the PCs have made an effort to befriend Tarten, the ranger returns after the fight with the guards is over and presents the PCs with the loot Stenius took from them. If he doesn't have Stenius to chase, Tarten calmly uses his bow to pick off archers, trusting the PCs to keep him out of melee.

Del Sonora and Adominus do not fight unless the guards melee them. Del heals the PCs as the need arises—no charge.

The towers are messy and hold nothing valuable. Each guard, however, has a chest filled with a few personal items and some copper coins, 1,500 cp in all.

Major NPCs

Del Sonora

9th Level Female Human Priestess of Deneir

STR: 13
INT: 18
WIS: 16
DEX: 12
CON: 14
CHA: 17

AC Normal: −1
AC Rear: 0
Hit Points: 42
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Goblin, Hill Giant
THAC0: 16

Age: 27
Height: 5' 4"
Weight: 110 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Red/Green

Weapon Proficencies: Mace, hammer, club
Nonweapon Proficencies: Spellcraft (16), read/write Common (19), religion (16), etiquette (17), riding, land-based (19)
Magic Items: *Bracers of defense AC 0,* three *potions of extra healing, Kheogtom's ointment* (four applications), *boots of striding and springing, footman's mace +3*

Spells carried: *cure light wounds* (x4), *protection from evil* (x2), *slow poison* (x2), *know alignment* (x2), *silence 15' radius, aid, speak with dead, dispel magic, prayer, neutralize poison, protection from evil 10' radius, flame strike*

Del is polite, attractive, and generally a delightful traveling companion. Currently, however, her order desperately needs money, and she has agreed to wander throughout Faerun collecting alms and selling clerical services. She hates the task, but understands why it is necessary. Her charges go as follows: for every point of healing she requires a donation of 10 gp. She can give advice about anything for 100 g.p. per question. If she doesn't know the answer to a question she doesn't charge.

Once Del begins to look upon the PCs as comrades rather than "customers," she won't charge them anymore—this change of heart definitely will occur if the PCs rescue her from the tanar'ri.

Tarten

9th Level Male Human Ranger

STR: 18/01
INT: 14
WIS: 16
DEX: 16
CON: 16
CHA: 15

AC Normal: 3
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 81
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Goblin, Ogre
THAC0: 12

Age: 31
Height: 5' 10"
Weight: 187 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Blond/Brown

Weapon Proficencies: Spear, Long sword, broad sword, dagger, long bow, hand axe
Nonweapon Proficencies: Tracking (19), read/write Common (15), animal lore (15), blind-fighting, mountaineering (50%), hunting (15), fishing (15)
Magic Items: *Cloak of protection +3, bag of holding* (1,500 lbs./250 cu. ft. capacity), *spear +3, broad sword +2 giant slayer,* 20 *arrows +2*

Spells carried: *Entangle, invisibility to animals*

Ranger Skills

HS	MS
56	70

Tarten tends to keep to himself most of the time. The only time he really becomes assertive or aggressive is during encounters or other important events—then he speaks firmly, but politely, and even cracks a joke or two.

Thorin

Third Level Male Human Fighter

STR: 17
INT: 11
WIS: 13
DEX: 18
CON: 18
CHA: 12

AC Normal: −2
AC Rear: 3
Hit Points: 27
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Dwarvish
THAC0: 18

Age: 19
Height: 6'
Weight: 191 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Brown

Weapon Proficencies: Heavy lance, long sword, knife, mace, short bow
Nonweapon Proficencies: Endurance (18), riding, land-based (16), hunting (12)
Magic Items: *Long sword +2, ring of animal friendship, potion of levitation*

Thorin is the third son of a minor noble family in Tantras. Since his family is poor, Thorin has already received his inheritance, knighthood, a warhorse, and a squire (Lance). The young knight, who still hasn't gotten used to being called "sir," is on his way to Ravens Bluff to seek service with Lord Mayor O'Kane. Thorin is very eager to perform a heroic deed that will build his reputation and help land him a good job.

Stenius

Male Half-Elf Fighter/Wizard Level 2/2

STR: 17
INT: 18
WIS: 15
DEX: 15
CON: 15

CHA: 15

AC Normal: 9
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 16
Alignment: Chaotic Neutral
Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Orc, Goblin
THAC0: 19

Age: 47
Height: 5′ 5″
Weight: 112 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Ash Blond/Blue

Weapon Proficencies: Long sword, daggers, light crossbow, sap
Nonweapon Proficencies: Appraising (18), reading lips (16), read/write Common (19), riding, land-based (18)
Magic Items: *Long sword +1, dagger +1, potion of healing*

Spells carried: *sleep, magic missile*

Stenius is greedy and self-serving. He spends all his time during this adventure playing the role of the paranoid and oft-robbed merchant.

Adominus

9th Level Male Human Priest of Deneir

STR: 10
INT: 18
WIS: 18
DEX: 10
CON: 10
CHA: 16

AC Normal: 0
AC Rear: 1
Hit Points: 57
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Goblin, Hill Giant
THAC0: 16

Age: 28
Height: 5′ 7″
Weight: 122 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Black/Brown

Weapon Proficencies: Mace, hammer, club
Nonweapon Proficencies: Spellcraft (16), read/write Common (19), religion (16), heraldry (17), riding, land-based (19)
Magic Items: *Chain mail +4, footman's mace +3, scroll of protection from fiends, wings of flying, boots of elevnkind*

Spells carried: *cure light wounds* (x4), *protection from evil* (x2), *find traps* (x2), *know alignment* (x2), *hold person, silence 15′ radius, speak with dead, dispel magic, prayer, glyph of warding, feign death, cure serious wounds, protection from evil 10′ radius, quest*

Unlike his colleague, Del Sonora, Adominus has no trouble charging for his services, though even he will relent if the PCs swear fealty to Deneir or agree to perform a service for the church (Adominus regards Kantal as a servant of the church, since he's escorting the two priests). Most of the time, Adominus is content to let Del do all the talking, since she's so good at it.

Kantal

Male Human Paladin/Cleric, Level 7/9

STR: 17
INT: 17
WIS: 18
DEX: 16
CON: 18
CHA: 18

AC Normal: −2
AC Rear: 0
Hit Points: 84
Alignment: Lawful Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Thorass, Gold Dragon
THAC0: 14

Age: 34
Height: 6′ 2″
Weight: 172 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Chestnut/Brown

Weapon Proficencies: Long sword, spear, heavy lance, dagger, short bow, bec de corbin, mace
Nonweapon Proficencies: Dancing (16), navigation (15), animal handling (17), heraldry (16), riding, land-based (21)
Magic Items: *Plate mail +3, long sword +3, dagger +3, heavy lance +3*

Spells carried: *cure light wounds* (x2), *command* (x2) *enthrall* (x2), *augury, aid, hold person, locate object, cure blindness/deafness, dispel magic, prayer, cure serious wounds, free action, detect lie, true seeing*

Kantal is a cleric of Ilmater and has an unusually sunny disposition and outgoing personality for a person dedicated to the crying god. He is well aware of his enemies' desire to take revenge on him and is quite uncomfortable with finding himself in charge of this impromptu caravan. It is not the responsibility he fears, but the very real possibility of failure.

Hoarthgar

Eighth Level Human Male Fighter

STR: 18/51
INT: 15
WIS: 10
DEX: 18
CON: 18
CHA: 9

AC Normal: 0
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 90
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Languages: Common, Kara-Tur Trade
THAC0: 13

Age: 35
Height: 5′ 6″
Weight: 157 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Black/Brown

Weapon Proficencies: Short composite bow, light lance, scimitar (specialist), hand axe, knife, lasso
Nonweapon Proficencies: Riding, land-based (x2) (14), survival-plains (15), running (12)

Hoarthgar is a steppe warrior from the Hordelands turned adventurer. He has little understanding of things such as legal documents and property ownership, and a dishonest merchant in Mulmaster recently sold him a huge pile of bogus land deeds in Ravens Bluff.

Lance

Third Level Male Human Fighter

STR: 15
INT: 10
WIS: 12
DEX: 10
CON: 18
CHA: 14

AC Normal: 4
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 27
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Dwarvish
THAC0: 18

Age: 17
Height: 6′ 11″
Weight: 171 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Brown

Weapon Proficencies: Heavy lance, long sword, knife, mace, short bow
Nonweapon Proficencies: Endurance (18), riding, land-based (16), hunting (12)
Magic Item: *Long sword +1*

Lance has been Thorin's servant almost since birth, and the two are accustomed to doing everything together. Lance will never abandon Thorin or contradict him in public. ❑

With Great Power

Part 2: Alternate campaign settings

by Dale A. Donovan

This column, the second of two (the first part appeared in issue 65), explores campaign settings borrowed from sources not related to the MARVEL UNIVERSE or the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game. I'll discuss genres, and settings within each genre, that would make interesting super-heroic campaign bases for your MARVEL SUPER HEROES game characters.

Motion pictures are a great source to steal ideas for use in a game of the appropriate genre. Also, there are so many movies on videotape available for rent that movies are a cheap, fast, and easy campaign resource. (Hence the presence of Jim Lowder's terrific movie-review column in this Newszine. I'll try not to step on any toes, Jim.) I'll discuss at least one movie in each genre that I think would work well as a super-heroic campaign setting. I'm assuming everyone reading this is a gamer, and that's why the other source for ideas I'll talk about is other role-playing games. As gamers, I assume you have games other than the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game on your shelves. So, many of the games I mention should be available to you either in your own library, in a friend's, etc. I'll mention at least one game per genre that has a background suitable for use with super-campaigns.

In all the examples below, I'm not suggesting that you take the universe verbatim and plug your PC heroes into it just like that. Every setting suggested below will need to be tailored to your likes and dislikes, your heroes' power levels and personalities, etc. Turn each setting into *your* version of that universe, suitable for play with your hero characters. If your players are familiar with your source material, much of their wonder in discovering and exploring your campaign setting will be lost.

Science Fiction

This past summer's release of the film, *Terminator 2*, reminded me of what a great campaign setting that future history could make. Since the events of the second film have put the future back in doubt, I'll talk about setting up campaigns using just the events from the first film (putting aside those nagging time paradoxes).

You'll remember that the first film foretold of the destruction of human civilization by machines. Your PC heroes can live in the modern world, learn of the world's fate, and try to alter the course of events before it's too late. They could also protect the present day and its inhabitants from further invasions from the future (like those in *Terminator 2).* Or, the heroes could live in that future setting. Perhaps they were the results of some mutagenic experiments carried out by the machines, or the toxic environment of that future, warring world could have mutated them to the point that their superpowers appear. In either case, they could do battle alongside John Connor and other humans against the robotic Hunter-Killers, other war machines, or even the dreaded Terminator cyborgs. Another option is that they could be sent back in time in pursuit of Terminators or to prevent the events that resulted in man's downfall.

A universe that offers an immense amount of available background material is that of the *Star Wars* movies and games. Your PCs could be rebels fighting the overwhelmingly superior forces of the Empire. Jedi Knights can already be considered super heroes, as they possess unusual powers. Your heroes could be Jedi if they all have mental powers, or the concept of Jedi Knights could be widened to include physical powers, all of which also come from the Force. Or, if you're feeling villainous, you could be trusted servants of the Emperor, Vader, and the Dark Side. In any case, I suggest using a set-up similar to that used in the role-playing game. The role-playing game is set just after the events of the film, *Star Wars*. The Rebels have shown they are a force to be reckoned with since they've proven themselves ingenious enough to destroy the first Death Star, but they are still pitifully outnumbered and outgunned. The best sources of information on this universe other than the movies are the source books for the role-playing game. *The Star Wars Source Book, The Imperial Source Book*, and *The Rebel Alliance Source Book* are all chock full of background information useable in campaign construction. All the game material is published by West End Games.

Cyberpunk

While technically a sub-genre of science fiction, I'll discuss cyberpunk separately since its attitude and outlook are unique.

To my mind, the film *Blade Runner*, starring Harrison Ford, is the quintessential cyberpunk film. That film shows just how a cyberpunk world should look. Your PCs could be police (Blade Runners) working to keep some semblance of order in a highly chaotic world ruled by mega-corporations that make their own rules. Or, they could be freelancers, working for justice in the dark streets of the city. If ethics aren't a concern, they could actually work for one of the megacorps, following orders and enforcing company policy. This basic background also applies to most of the cyberpunk role-playing games on the market.

One game that puts an interesting twist on the typical cyberpunk setting is the *Dark Conspiracy* game by GDW. Cyber-horror is the best term I can come up with to describe the game. Take a typical cyberpunk world and add an awakened, malevolent, supernatural force and its minions. Why not add super heroes to the mix?

Player heroes could also be "awakened" beings, destined to combat the evil forces now abroad in this already dangerous world. They could be hired by one of the megacorps that wants to reclaim some *demonground* (areas haunted by Dark Minions), for oil or mineral rights, etc.

Player characters could also work for one of the now-weakened governments of the world, helping to wrest control of territory from the influences of both the megacorps and the Dark Ones.

Fantasy

Super heroes aren't often thought of when considering the fantasy genre, since most fantastic adventures have their own heroes. But that's no reason not to try a super-fantasy campaign.

A good modern fantasy universe is

that of the film, *Highlander*. The U.S. version of the film was so poorly edited that the resulting film is often confusing, requiring a couple viewings to figure out exactly what is going on. But, any film that has swords *and* Sean Connery in it can't be all bad.

Basically, the film postulated that a small group of all-but-immortal individuals existed and fought one another for eventual, yet subtle, control of the world. PCs could be members of this elite group (though they needn't be immortal), just discovering their abilities and learning that others like them exist. Some of these others though, are evil and seek to make the world a violent, horrible place for any less powerful than they. Maintaining the proper atmosphere would be absolutely essential in this campaign. Since they are so few, the beings keep their existences secret, to protect themselves from discovery by society at large, which could react violently, and from their foes. There'd be no flashy costumes or chrome Quinjets in this universe. There'd be instead trench-coated persons engaging in vicious, high-powered fights in dark alleys, with both parties likely fleeing if discovered. Even if the heroes are immortal, they still need one or two vulnerabilities to keep an edge of fear in the game. Perhaps only others like themselves know these weaknesses, but that makes them more dangerous.

For a medieval fantasy campaign, base your super heroes in any fantasy game world of your choice. Imagine your heroes adventuring in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting, the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting, or Krynn of the DRAGONLANCE® saga. How would these heroes be treated—as powerful wizards and mighty warriors; or as dread fiends from the Abyss, to be hunted down and destroyed? Taking this idea even further, try putting your heroes into one of the AD&D® games alternate genre settings such as the new DARK SUN™ world or the SPELLJAMMER™ setting. A great example of super heroes in a fantasy realm was presented in Marvel's *Iron Man* comic (issues #149-150) when Iron Man and Doctor Doom traveled back in time to King Arthur's court at Camelot.

Horror

Although I've already briefly touched on horror, true horror campaigns are a wonderful change of pace for heroes who are used to being the toughest kids on the block. Even an occasional side trip into a one-shot horror scenario can really keep the players on their toes during all their escapades.

For an adventurous romp that can be both fun *and* scary, the genre of monster movies is the place to start. Find out just how well your heroes would do against Godzilla, King Kong, Mothra, and so on. Or, if one truly huge monster isn't to your taste, put your heroes up against many smaller, but still pretty big and nasty critters like those from all the 1950s "giant bug" movies. *Them!* and the much more modern *Tremors* are two films that stand out in my mind as good films for adaptation. Your heroes could be on vacation or otherwise minding their own business when, suddenly—mutated giant ants, bees, carnivorous worms, or whatever attack without warning. Of course, any normal people endangered by these critters would turn to the heroes to aid and leadership. This would leave the PCs with trying to come up with a way to defeat the creatures, protect the normal folks, prevent panic and general stupidity, etc. (This is a great opportunity for GMs to play *really* stupid NPCs. You know the type, the folks who always have to find the source of that hideous screaming in the next room.)

As for horror games, I'd normally recommend the *Call of Cthulhu* game by Chaosium (and I do most heartily recommend it for a straight horror campaign), but since heroes can be so much more powerful than normal folks, and since that role is reserved for the creatures of H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos in the game, I hesitate to recommend putting heroes into this game for fear of the game losing its formidable mystique of unabashed terror on the part of the characters (and the players). It might be possible to pull off, but your heroes might end up frustrated with their own ineffectiveness against these beasties.

Instead, I'll mention a horror game that takes a unique approach to the role-playing subject of vampires. White Wolf's *Vampire* game players take the role of vampires living in our modern society, masquerading as normal humans. Your campaign's PCs could stumble across this secret society and then must decide what to do about it. Even if some of the vampires aren't rampaging fiends (or are even friendly), they still are blood-sucking vampires, creatures of the night, and all that. Do the heroes callously seek to destroy them all, perhaps by trying to convince the world at large that vampires really do exist? Or will they keep the secret, try to police the vampires from overindulgence, or even try to find a cure for vampirism (a la *Dark Shadows*)? For a real twist, perhaps the PCs discover that their powers result from a vampiric ancestor, and that ancestor is still "alive" and is now seeking his descendants' aid. Perhaps the heroes' powers are revealed to be supernatural in origin, making the PCs a kind of kin to the vampires. In either case, now the PCs must reevaluate their attitudes toward these undead creatures.

Other Heroic Universes

Super heroes are no longer limited only to comic books. In the past few years, many films with vaguely super human protagonists have appeared. *Remo Williams*, the wryly humorous *Jake Speed*, and *Batman* are just three examples of fairly mainstream settings that could be adapted for use in a true super hero campaign.

As for other super hero games, why not take your MARVEL SUPER HEROES game characters on a jaunt through the DC Comics universe. There is certainly enough of Mayfair Games' *DC Heroes* game source material out there to handle a long-term campaign through Gotham City, Metropolis, Central City, and so on. A good book to pick up if you'd like to try this is *The Atlas of the DC Universe*. If you're looking for a campaign with a darker atmosphere, try Alan Moore's *Watchmen*. I highly recommend the graphic novel to anyone who hasn't read it. That, and Mayfair's *Watchmen Source Book*, by Ray Winninger, are all you'll need to set up a similarly grim campaign.

If you prefer more generic, less well-known sources of alternative super hero campaigns, I have one more recommendation that may sound familiar to you. I mentioned *Champions in 3-D* back in issue #63, and I just can't say enough good things about this clever collection of well thought out alternative campaign settings for your heroes. Places like Nazi World, Rome World, Backworld, and many more await your heroes. If you enjoyed this column, you will love this book. It's published by I.C.E./Hero Games, and it's a must-have for every super hero game referee. ❑

The Everwinking Eye

Adventures in Mulmaster

by Ed Greenwood

"What makes the hearts of fools beat strongest? Adventure. What makes bards sing most brightly? Adventure. What keeps outlaws and the unruly from growing so numerous they o'errun all the Realms? Adventure. So you see, lad: it hath its uses."

Arivaunt of Ormath, Sage
Lectures to a Youngling
Year of the Struck Gong

As Arivaunt so cheerfully tells us, adventure has its uses—particularly in an AD&D® game campaign. We've explored Mulmaster fairly thoroughly in these past few visits, and you've no doubt felt the way I did when Elminster went on about the cruelty and driving ambition of Mulmasterites. It's like being told men with green hair are really, really evil . . . if you hear it often enough, you want to know *how* they show their "evil." What does "evil" really mean when one talks about green-haired men, anyway?

There is no better way to understand Mulmasterites and their city than to taste a few adventures set in the City of Danger. Therefore, Elminster and I are pleased to present two suggested adventures for campaign play involving Mulmaster. More will follow in the next installment of this column.

DMs who enjoy intrigue in play and doing a lot of role playing, including juggling many roles, could well involve Player Characters in two or more Mulmasteran adventures at once. Such combined adventures will make the PCs uneasy and often frustrated, but if the players also enjoy role playing, such play should prove especially memorable.

When PCs run afoul of the authorities and encounter citizens of Mulmaster in the streets, apply the following general guideline: 65% of those encountered will attack the PCs or report them to the authorities in hopes of reward; the other 35% will be afraid to get involved, or not wish to spare the time and trouble.

If soldiers or nobles encounter the PCs and citizens, many citizens will try to slip away. However, any who are near when the authorities call for help or order citizens to assist will do so (100%), unless the PCs are obviously superior or employ spectacular magic (in which case the DM should determine by the morale of individual citizens to determine whether they flee).

The Phantom Ship

When soldiers capture a merchant who has neglected to pay taxes on a ship, the prisoner avoids a beating by claiming he's sold the ship to the PCs, whom he has seen in the streets, and gives the soldiers an exact description. The merchant, one Khondas Bosttar, is released, and promptly loads the ship with cargo from a dockside warehouse that is not his own, and sails away.

The ship, a small cog known as the *Lisen Princess*, vanishes down the Dragon Reach and is not seen again. The soldiers, reinforced by two Cloak mages, turn up to get the expected tax money from the PCs. Payments on the *Princess* are six months behind and total 120 gp plus transaction fees (the DM is free to set a sum appropriate to the campaign). The Cloaks will try to read the PCs' thoughts, and if the Cloaks pick up hostile thoughts toward any authorities in Mulmaster, they will direct the soldiers to capture the PCs.

If the PCs put up a fight, they are declared outlaws, whether they pay the ship's taxes, and they probably will be slain or imprisoned under the South Road Keep. Prisoners are interrogated about treasure, deeds, contacts, current political information, trade details, and the like. All PC magic items and cash or other items of value will be confiscated, and the prisoners will be stripped of all mundane equipment and clothing. Most prisoners die a shivering death, succumbing to exposure in the cold, damp cells in the Keep's stone dungeons.

One of the Cloaks has a *necklace of missiles*, which he will not hesitate to use. Even if the PCs manage to resolve this dispute peacefully, a Cloak's judgment of them as ideal targets could lead to other adventures.

To Rescue A Lady

A soft-spoken, grim-looking man contacts the PCs. He is well dressed and bears a rapier and dagger at his belt. He asks to speak with them privately, and he gives his name (falsely) as Urlo. His real name is Khondas, and he is a Neutral Evil 6th level fighter who wears an *amulet of proof against detection and location* to conceal his thoughts and alignment. "Urlo" claims to be an adviser to, and agent of, the Blade Thuilander Khaumair, authorized to offer adventurers of skill and discretion two thousand pieces of gold each for a fast night's work: the rescue of Thuilander's lady. Payment will be 500 pieces of gold each upon acceptance of the bargain. A locked chest containing the advance money is brought by a squad of 20 archers armed with their bows, short swords and *rings of spell turning*. Each PC is given his 500 gp and an I.O.U. for the rest bearing Thuilander's seal and signed by Urlo. The I.O.U.s are redeemable only after the lady is safe in Thuilander's arms, alive and unharmed by her rescuers.

The lady, a noblewoman of slim build and gentle manners named Jhaless Nimuir, is tall and has waist-length silvery-gray hair. She is the prisoner of the Blade Kormarth Ulsant, in his five-towered house in the heights of the city. Chains and locks do not confine her, but only *charm* magics—for Kormarth wishes her to be his bride. He has installed her in luxurious apartments, visits her nightly, and calls her (as do his servants, by order) "my lady."

If the PCs undertake the rescue mission, they will face well-trained guards armed with lances, clubs, daggers, short swords, and (occasionally) with crossbows the quarrels of which are tipped with sleep venom. The PCs should prevail if Kormarth is absent on business; the lady herself will struggle feebly and cry, but says little. They will be instructed by Urlo to bring their prize to a certain house on a dark, narrow street.

If the PCs do so, they find a tall, masked man in a cloak waiting, with chests of gold and many guards. The man is wearing a *greenstone amulet*, detailed in *FR4/The Magister*, *FA1/Halls of the High King*, and several other Realms sources. This item basically prevents all sorts of mind-reading or mental control and influence). He also wears a *ring of spell turning*, and a *necklace of missiles*.

The man will take Jhaless in his arms, embrace her hungrily, and say, "My *lady*!" Then he will indicate the chests and say to the PCs, "You have earned your gold. See that it is all there, and please take it and go. I thank you. You have done me much service this night."

The gold is good, and no one will offer the PCs violence unless they try to hold out for more coin for their work, or attack Urlo, the guards (who are armed with sleep-venomed weapons), or the (false) masked Blade.

Only later will the PCs hear the news in the city taverns and market stalls that some hireswords have kidnapped the Lady Jhaless Nimuir, bride of the Blade Kormarth Ulsant, and that the Blade Thuilander Khaumair is holding her for ransom somewhere in the city.

Selfaril, High Blade of Mulmaster, declares Thuilander a traitor whose rank and holdings in the city are forfeit, and further declares the ruffians who did the kidnapping outlaws and brigands to be hunted down and slain on sight. Somehow Selfaril has learned the precise names and descriptions of the PCs, for these are included in his public announcement!

The PCs quickly learn that Selfaril's agents and the soldiers of the city are hunting for them, with orders to slay on sight and burn the bodies so that the PCs cannot be resurrected or questioned via *speak with dead* spells. Agents of both Blades Thuilander and Kormarth will also be hunting for the PCs, to capture them for questioning (under torture, if need be) as to the whereabouts of the Lady Jhaless. Urlo will have vanished.

Alert PCs may discover that Selfaril has engineered the whole plot to discredit Thuilander and temporarily distract Kormarth's attention from more dangerous ambitions—if they have time to do any investigating in the face of all the blades that will be coming their way.

And so, for now, "swords keep safe as we part," as the caravan-masters say in Scornubel. There's news to share, though; things have been busy in the Realms again!

Current Clack

* Jaern Blackulblade, an adventurer from Crimmor, has left Amn at the head of a newly-formed adventuring company calling itself The Band of Blades. The group rode south and then east from Eshpurta, possibly towards The Forest of Shadows. Jaern promised his sponsors in Amn a return of "gems—more gems than you've ever seen in one place before." No one, except Jaern, knows from where the promised riches will come. The gossip in Amn speculates that Jaern seeks a dragon lair in the Snowflake Mountains, or an old dwarfhold somewhere in the area. No one knows how Jaern learned of this treasure, or even where he has been for the winter preceding his return to Crimmor to find sponsors.

* The half-elven adventuress Aleandre Nindreene warns that some of the magic from Myth Drannor evidently bears a curse or magical traps: a wand she brought back from the ruins (and gave to a friend) and a blade she found there on another trip (which she kept) share a disturbing ability: the power to *summon* beholders into the items' presence. This power operates at random intervals and is not (so far) subject to magical alteration or nullification. The eye tyrants, when they show up, are not amused by their enforced journey, and are in no way under the control of the item wielder! Others who have gained Myth Drannan magic should beware, Nindreene warns.

* A famous magic item, The Sword of Starlight, has been stolen from an unnamed vizier's treasury in Calimshan. This blade was once the property—and the making—of the Royal House of Tethyr. The sword served many Tethan monarchs in battle until it was lost (with its owner) in the bloody battle of Nightflames (DR 1334), where the mounted troops of Tethyr were defeated by orcs commanded by evil sorcerers and satraps outcast from Calimshan.

These malcontents were said to have tried to establish their own kingdom, Mulsparkh, between Tethyr and Calimshan, but were crushed by the Calishite viziers after initial success against Tethyr. Most sages of the North, including Elminster, believe that there were no outcasts, but only bored viziers' sons and ambitious sorcerers whom the Calishite rulers allowed to play for a while. When they grew too dangerous, they were ruthlessly eliminated. The viziers seized all the treasure they had wrested from Tethyr, and then announced that they had defeated "the evil of Mulsparkh" as a service to all free Faerun.

"To our credit," Elminster says, "even Calishite sages openly laughed at that one. Calishites who wield power of any kind tend to show an unfortunate weakness—they tend to see all folk beneath them and in the rest of the world as mere cattle, so stupid as to be easily duped."

The sage reminds us all of the Northern saying: "The Calishite is blind with pride because his tongue wags so long with lies that it is often wrapped entirely about his head, covering eyes and all."

There is a longstanding enmity between Calishites and those who live north of Amn: Calishites regard Northerners as uncultured, unwashed, stone-headed barbarians, not worthy of human treatment. Northerners regard Calishites as cruel, presumptuous, debauched, soft fools who delight in life-wasting games of intrigue and in slavery. Calishite men treat women worse than dogs—a black, inhuman crime to a Northerner of either sex, but merely the natural and proper civilized way of things to a Calishite.

* Faerim, a sailor of the Sword Coast who has returned to his home in Waterdeep after escaping from pirate captivity in The Nelanther, is busy spending some of the rich treasure he was able to bring with him from the pirates and telling tales of ships that fly!

The sailor was an unwilling crewman on *The Scimitar of Fire*, a vessel captained by one Raurivyl Ornshield, a fat and brawling Calishite who perfumed his beard. Raurivyl is well-known to shipmasters of Amn, whose ships he takes especial delight in sinking. Lately, Raurivyl has taken his ship west past the Gull rocks, seeking to discover a desolate island to serve as a refuge and base; each time he found only empty, rolling seas and the warding elven ships of Evermeet, which keep all uninvited vessels far away from their land.

On three of these trips, the sailor Faerim attests, the ships of Evermeet soared up out of the waves, dripping water from their hulls. Once aloft, the ships hung above the *Scimitar*, tilting their decks to aim strange weapons at the pirate vessel, while warning it away by means of magical speaking horns. Each time Raurivyl wisely turned back, and each time the elven craft followed him, aloft, sailing the sky as easily as it did the seas. Faerim swears he tells the truth, and that he had not been drinking when he saw these sights. ❑

Into The Dark

The Wierd West, Part II

by James Lowder

You can't get any better	*****
Entertaining and enjoyable	****
There are worse films	***
Wait for cable	**
A waste of good tape	*

The Valley Of Gwangi

1969, 95 Minutes
Warner Brothers
Director: James O'Connolly
Cast: James Franciscus, Gila Golan, Richard Carlson
****

OK, I'll admit right from the start that I'm incredibly biased toward this movie. The whole notion of cowboys facing off against dinosaurs just appeals to me, I guess.

The basic plot for *Gwangi* was created by *King Kong* animator, Willis O'Brian. In this little gem, a traveling circus comes across the find of a lifetime in Mexico, a lost valley inhabited by prehistoric creatures. They capture a couple of the "extinct" animals — including a tiny horse and the title monster, an allosaurus-like carnivore with a bad disposition. When they put Gwangi on display in a stadium, havoc results.

Without the Western angle, the tale does resemble *Kong* quite a bit, and the human actors are nowhere near as convincing in their roles as the stop-motion dinosaurs. The film starts slowly, too, but that's deceptive; *Gwangi* is like a boulder rolling downhill. Once it gets going, there's no stopping it.

The basic appeal of the premise, coupled with the absolutely stunning effects work by Ray Harryhausen, give *Gwangi* its kick. The scenes of Gwangi battling an elephant make this film worth renting all on their own.

You may not think the movie deserves a rating quite as high as I give it, but you'll certainly find it fun to watch. Get out the popcorn, folks, this one's definitely worth a look. For you collectors, *Gwangi* has just been released on video laser disc.

WESTWORLD

1973, 89 Minutes
MGM/UA
Director: Michael Crichton
Cast: Yul Brynner, Richard Benjamin, James Brolin
***

Writer/director Michael Crichton loves stories about science out of control.

In *Westworld* Crichton gives us Delos, the ultimate amusement park, the vacation spot for those with active fantasy lives. Within its borders are three separate worlds—recreations of the Old West, the late Roman empire, and medieval Europe. In these areas, guests can duel with the black knight or have a shoot-out with a grim-visaged gunslinger. Thanks to the miracle of super-advanced androids, you actually get to shoot people, hack them up, and otherwise mistreat them.

Richard Benjamin and James Brolin play white collar-types who go to Westworld to get away from it all. Things are swell, too, until a mysterious and completely unexplained virus begins to affect the androids. The cause might be this virus or the dawning of self-consciousness, but whatever the reason, the robots start looking to even the score with the guests. And there's one android in particular, a cold-hearted killer, who wants both Brolin and Benjamin dead.

The acting is solid, despite the mostly made-for-TV movie cast, and the story itself is quite compelling. Where *Westworld* suffers is in Crichton's direction. This shows most in the final confrontation between Benjamin and the gunslinger (played to the hilt by Yul Brynner); what should be a chase scene to rival *The Terminator* comes across as a guided tour through the sub-basement of General Hospital. The movie is still enjoyable, but even at only 89 minutes, it'll tempt you to use the fast forward button more than once.

By the way, Crichton's newest novel is a story of science-gone-bad, too. *Jurassic Park* tells the tale of genetically engineered dinosaurs run amuck. A film of the novel is on its way, directed by none other than Steven Spielberg. Watch for it next summer.

OUTLAND

1981, 109 Minutes
Warner
Director: Peter Hyams
Cast: Sean Connery, James B. Sikking, Peter Boyle
**1/2

On the surface, the notion of remaking the classic Western, *High Noon* as an SF story sounds appealing. It might have worked, too, but never in the hands of Peter "*Capricorn One*" Hyams.

The basic plot for *High Noon* is simple. A marshal learns that a killer has been released from prison and that he'll be arriving on the noon train to exact his revenge. The marshal hopes to get the townsfolk to support him in facing down the murderer, but discovers that the people for whom he's risked his life won't lift a finger to help him.

In *Outland*, Sean Connery plays a Federal Marshal assigned to keep the peace in a mining colony on one of Jupiter's moons. When he discovers an illegal drug ring, he faces off against the mine's supervisor (Peter Boyle) and methodically smashes the operation. Where the plot parallels *High Noon* is in the final half hour, when a group of killers arrives on the shuttle, intent on doing in the marshal.

The whole point of *High Noon* is lost in *Outland*, since the mine is depicted as a rotten place from the start. Connery should never expect anyone to help him, so his one-man crusade seems a bit foolish.

The acting in *Outland* is uniformly top notch, especially from Connery and *Hill Street Blues* veteran James Sikking. The special effects are really sharp, as well; they convey the immensity of the mining operation with subtlety and style. It's the story itself that makes the film tough to watch. Connery can't help but seem daft for fighting the system, especially when he proves himself a failure in the climactic scene with Boyle.

We take a trip back to the realms of fantasy next time, but we'll be stopping by neighborhoods where dragons never hang out. ❑

The Living Galaxy

All That Glitters Sure Is Nice: Part 1

by Roger E. Moore

You've foiled the Zhodani, blasted the Space Orks, captured the Klingons, escaped the Stormtroopers, nuked the Kafers, laughed in the face of RAM, and now the adventure's over. You've saved the world again. But what have you got to show for it?

Some science fiction role-playing adventures lack something that most fantasy games have: a nice big chest full of gold in a 10′ × 10′ room. Many science fiction adventures offer the nice sort of rewards you can't spend: the solution to a mystery, the prevention of a disaster, the stopping of an invasion, etc. The personal satisfaction involved is great. But when it comes to material benefits, science fiction games sometimes come up short, or else they're very unimaginative—on the order of 10,000 credits and a hearty handshake.

You can argue that excessive material rewards cheapen a campaign by making the players less interested in more lofty and selfless goals, such as rescuing captives or saving worlds. I can buy that. But any game master can add some much-appreciated spice to his campaign with a few worthwhile trinkets, big and small, scattered around for the PCs to pick up. Materialism isn't always so bad, eh?

A Few Golden Guidelines

Everything is valuable to someone, but one man's treasure is often another man's junk. The range of what constitutes a treasure is very broad, and this article and the one in the next issue make an attempt to scratch the surface of the problem. Some difficulties in selecting treasure for a science fiction adventure need to be pointed out first, however.

1. Balance. Many fantasy games have fixed treasure types set up for every sort of wandering monster or NPC you encounter. Science fiction games nearly always lack this set-up, and GMs will have to be very careful in assigning treasure amounts as a result. It is very easy to overdo it and turn the PCs into zillionaires in just a few sessions.

If you must err, be cheap and miserly. When the PCs search the hold of a pirate ship they've captured, place only a little cargo there. If they wipe out a smuggling gang, let only a few items fall into the PCs' hands for resale later. If cash bounties are offered for completing a "normal" adventure, set an upper limit of about 10,000-50,000 dollars, credits, domars, or what have you, paid to the adventuring group as a whole.

As time goes on, the financial needs of the PCs should become clearer, and this can help dictate the rewards of the campaign. If the PCs need about 100,000 credits per year to keep their starship running and pay their basic expenses, you can figure out just how rich you want the PCs to become. A figure of about two times the annual "needed" finances should keep the PCs in moderate running order.

If you do happen to give away too much treasure, you can try some of the celebrated solutions to this problem as applied to fantasy RPGs. Thieves, pirates, bandits, computer (read "magical") fraud, swindlers, bribery "fees," tricky merchants, and so on may acquire some of the cash and credit the PCs once swam in.

But why have someone steal the money *illegally?* Taxes, tariffs, poor currency exchange rates, criminal fines, nationalization, wartime seizure of assets, legal fees, business failures, emergency expenses, inflation, and other perfectly legal means exist to cut any PC's finances down to acceptable levels. However, avoid making this subtraction of cash look like you, the GM, are picking on the PCs. If the means to lose money have always existed in the campaign, and if PCs have always had to protect their finances, then simply cutting off the source of the PCs' funds for a short time will allow normal attrition to do its job. Besides, you might *want* the PCs to be rich in your campaign, to give them a chance to enter a new phase of the game by buying a larger starship, setting up a corporation, creating a mercenary unit, or get things going in another big way.

2. Scatter the treasure. On most adventures, liberally sprinkle treasure throughout the adventuring environment. Don't put all the valuable stuff in one vault or cargo hold. Let some of the treasure be hidden, too, in several small caches and perhaps one large one. Scattering the treasure around ensures that the PCs might not find all of it, but they'll surely become much more clever in looking for it.

3. Surprise 'em. Consider unusual sources of valuable items when creating adventures. An orbital junkyard, a littered battlefield, and a long-forgotten military cache could hold unusual treasures and dangers. A relative might name a character in a will, leaving a starship or an estate to him—but the willed item must be found or fixed, first. You could even set up a sort of alien flea market or auction at which peculiar devices and clues to future quests can be gotten. How many different ways are there for the characters to get into trouble and have adventures while getting neat things? Think about this one for a while.

4. Use logic. Don't place inappropriate treasure in an adventure. Criminals who use unarmed martial arts will not have stockpiles of firearms, nor will a small pirate spacecraft have billions of credits aboard it. Figure out what valuables the NPCs and foes will have and use, applying healthy doses of reason. I was in a science fiction game once in which you could go from bare rags to staggering riches in a couple of game sessions, gaining the same amount of political power as well. It wasn't fun at all; it was just stupid.

5. Start small. Give the characters goals to shoot for by starting them out poor, with so-so equipment and a whole universe of options to take. If they get a starship, have it be an old model with a solid build but few specialized pieces of equipment. Then the group can customize their starship as they like, spending their hard-earned credits all the way. Starting small also allows the GM to keep better control over the game and allow time to slowly alter the campaign as the characters become more powerful and gain goals higher than physical or economic survival.

6. Vary the treasures. Have the characters gain several different types of treasures in each adventure. Some straight cash, a few gems, a new supply of ammunition, and a data disk full of

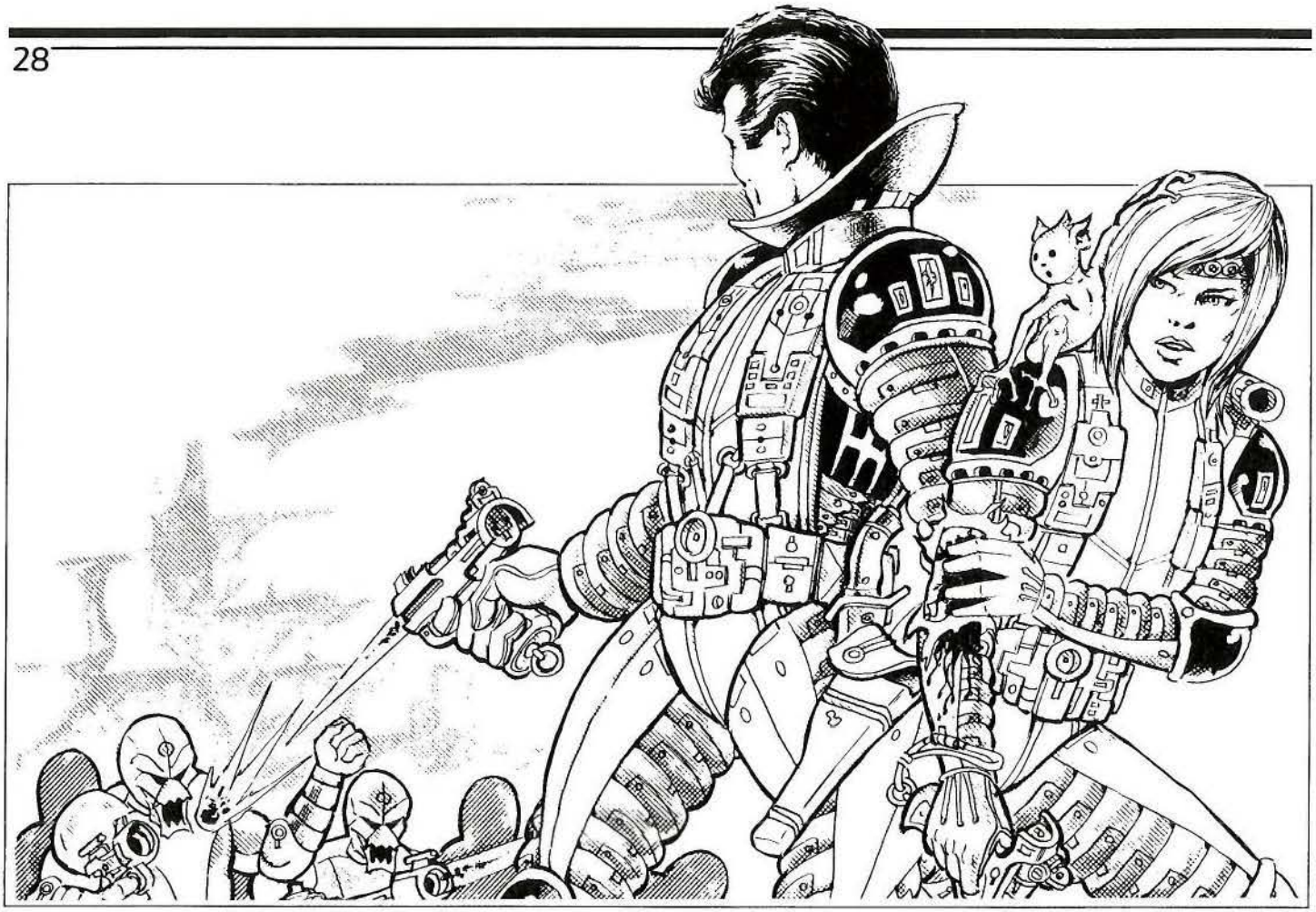


Illustration by Stephen Schwartz

secret information is a nice spread of odds and ends. Consider the wealth found in a fantasy-game dragon's hoard: If all you found there were gold pieces, it would be useful but very dull. Good fantasy hoards also contain magical weapons, armor, spell books, potions, and dozens of other things that are worth finding. Use the same considerations in your science fiction campaign as well.

This having been said, let's look at some basic material rewards (i.e., loot) that can be gained in science fiction campaigns.

Your Basic Loot

The most basic material reward available is money. Everyone loves it. But money comes in all shapes and sizes, and sometimes you can't spend it like you want.

Coins & cash: In an interstellar campaign, most worlds will probably mint their own coinage and print their own paper money — assuming they still use such currency. If you are a coin collector, you already know how many types of coins and bills exist around the world today. Imagine the chaos involved when the nations on a thousand worlds each produce their own money. Several articles in DRAGON® Magazine delved into the murky waters of coinage in fantasy role-playing game worlds, and much can be borrowed from those sources to enliven payment time after a science fiction adventure (see *Many Kinds of Money*, in DRAGON® Magazine #114, and *Just give me money!* in #167). Of course, an interstellar government might have a standard currency that is good on all member worlds—though in traveling from world to world, you might face the horrors of fluctuating exchange rates! Your 100,000 credits might be worth only two-thirds that in some areas, perhaps less in others; conversely, the characters might find an exchange rate in their favor, if the GM is being nice.

Consider, too, what happens if the characters are paid in currency that is nonconvertible, like the modern Russian ruble, so that it can be spent in only one area. Or consider the problems of hyperinflation on certain worlds, making recently paid rewards nearly worthless within months or weeks. Or counterfeiting rings run by criminals or saboteurs. Or contaminated currency, poisoned by accident or design with drugs or chemicals (real-life tests show that nearly all paper money in the U.S. now contains traces of cocaine). Or money that decays or corrodes easily, making storage a problem. Or marked money that can be traced—and perhaps *is* being traced, having recently been stolen by the people who paid the characters. Getting paid might create more adventures than it finishes.

Precious materials: Gems and jewels are standard fantasy-game fare for treasure; they work fine in science fiction games, too. However, technology might create artificial gems, making diamonds worthless, or might create whole new types of gemstones that glow in the dark, change colors, hum tunes, or do other fancy tricks. Jewelry combines precious metals (see the following) with gemstones, making it even more desirable as a reward if you can wear it or sell it.

Gold and silver are considered valuable by most modern governments. Salt was once considered valuable, a time from which the phrase "worth its salt" derives. Oil and coal would be valuable on worlds that have them, and they might be priceless on worlds without them (though of limited use, if such societies developed without the need of such fuels). Stocks of valuable minerals

and metals, such as hematite (iron), bauxite (aluminum), beryllium, chromium, cobalt, manganese, copper, titanium, niobium, tungsten, platinum, and vanadium could replace gold and silver as the basis of some world economies. The value of uranium and radioactive ores cannot be underestimated, and neither can other special substances mined in science fiction universes—such as dilithium in the *Star Trek* universe, duralloy in the GAMMA WORLD® game, or lanthanum in GDW's *MegaTraveller* game.

Of course, many adventurers might object to being paid in oil or salt for an adventure. But they might accept shares in an oil company or salt-mining firm. And who knows what price you could get for uranium, dilithium, or lanthanum on the interstellar market?

Other monies: Beyond regular currency, we have bank notes, precious metal certificates, checks, credit cards, stocks, savings bonds, deeds, and so forth. As with regular monies, some of these might not be transferable off the world where they are issued or awarded. Future societies are certain to have some sort of "invisible" cash, like credit-card accounts, and one can imagine a small metallic or plastic bank card that can be adjusted by complex programming to show your current bank account. To get paid, you run it through the payer's accounting machine, and your account gains money. To buy something, you run it through the store's machine, and money is deducted from your account. (We'll assume that tinkering with the card to change your account value is nearly impossible due to the process and safeguards involved—but characters can try anyway.

It would be much simpler just to have a worldwide network of computers keep track of your bank account as you buy things and get paid; you'd never need checks or cash, just that little bank card, which is easily replaced with the proper voiceprint, fingerprint, and retinaprint I.D. Is your card good off-world? Maybe an interstellar bank could make the proper account transfer by issuing you papers and a special card with the proper information, to be presented to a new bank on the next world you visit. Otherwise, you'll have bank accounts across the whole universe—an interesting idea, no?

Other futuristic societies might have a computer chip implanted under the skin on the back of your hand, so you simply have your hand read by a scanning device at any checkout counter. You'd never need to worry about losing your bank card—unless you have an accident and lose your hand, but let's not dwell on that.

These are some of the most basic forms of "treasure." But you have lots of ways to reward a dedicated group of space heroes. You can give them things they can use instead of spend, such as tools, weapons, vehicles, and other pieces of equipment. There are some tricks to offering this sort of reward, too.

From Mundane To Exotic

Another source of treasure is to take normal items and make them valuable and special by making them unusual. The characters might find these special items in the possession of captured, wounded, or dead foes; many might be purchased through stores or dealers, or they might be custom made to the characters' orders. Careful workmanship and high technology produce marvelous changes in nearly all manufactured items. Consider the following options, each of which is applied to a normal pistol, a clock, and an all-terrain exploration vehicle (ATV):

Smaller: The device is miniaturized. Bulky devices are made portable. Weight and encumbrance are greatly reduced. The pistol becomes a pen-sized weapon; the clock, a watch or a digital stick-on item the size of a postage stamp; the ATV, an all-terrain dirt bike.

More accurate: The device is more precise and accurate. The pistol gains a bonus to hit; the clock keeps better time; the ATV becomes easier to steer in bad terrain or traffic situations.

More powerful: The device gains some degree of potency and power. The pistol uses explosive, armor-piercing, or dum-dum ammunition; the clock's power source never needs replacement; the ATV has an upgraded engine and drive system and can haul multiton trailers or climb cliffs.

More reliable: The device is more durable and needs less maintenance, having few breakdowns. The pistol almost never jams; the clock needs no normal repairs; the ATV can go for months between maintenance checks.

More resistant: The device is better protected or armored from exposure to natural or manmade hazards. The pistol is water resistant; the clock works in extremes of temperature or vacuum; the ATV is armored like a light tank and is environmentally sealed.

Disguised/invisible: The device is camouflaged so that it will not be noticed for what it is. In extreme cases, the item is rendered invisible because it is either extremely small or is made from transparent materials. The pistol is made in the shape of a communications device; the clock's face and hands appear to be part of a sculpture; the ATV is painted in a jungle, desert, or other camouflage pattern, and it can lay down a smoke screen as well.

Smarter: The device has a programmable computer within it that allows it to account for unusual circumstances or to perform other tasks related to its main function. The pistol adjusts its sights for range; the clock shows elapsed time since take-off and can be used as a timer; the ATV's computer allows it to make appropriate adjustments depending on the environment (turn on the headlights in the dark, move at a constant speed without monitoring, slow down when rough terrain is detected, etc.).

Artistic: The device has been given aesthetic appeal—it is pretty to look at. The gun is made from a sleek, black metal with a mirrorlike sheen; the clock has a beautiful view of a galaxy on its face that glows in the dark; the ATV has an orange-flame pattern on its front.

Personalized: The device has been designed to appeal especially to its owner. The gun has a grip that fits its owner's hand, allowing for improved accuracy and drawing speed; the clock is a monogrammed watch; the ATV's driver's seat and controls conform to its owner's body shape, allowing for greater comfort, better handling, and faster reaction time.

More functions: The device has been combined with one or more other objects to produce a multifunction device. The pistol has a night-vision, telescopic sight useful for spying; the clock has been combined with a two-way radio; the ATV has a clock, radio, and TV on its dashboard, and it can be set up as a 10-man shelter in the wilderness.

High material value: The device is studded with gems, or else is made from or plated with precious metals and materials. The pistol has pearl handles with gold inlay; the clock has gemstones on its elaborately engraved face; the ATV's interior has plush carpeting, gold-plated control devices, and rare wood paneling.

Collectable: The device is either very rare, an antique, has historical value, or is otherwise different in a way that heightens its value to collectors. It

might be part of a set, be totally unique, have a bizarre appearance, or else share several attractive and valuable qualities at once. The pistol was used by a famed and respected general 135 years ago; the clock was made by a legendary space colony that no longer exists; the ATV has been cleverly cobbled together from vehicle parts on a dozen worlds and has been featured in periodicals and newscasts devoted to collectable vehicles.

Scientific/technical value: The device is wanted by researchers for their experiments and studies. The pistol uses a peculiar and little-known chemical process to fire its bullets; the clock is an incredibly accurate device that a physics laboratory could use; the ATV can be studied by a vehicle manufacturer in order to produce a better model.

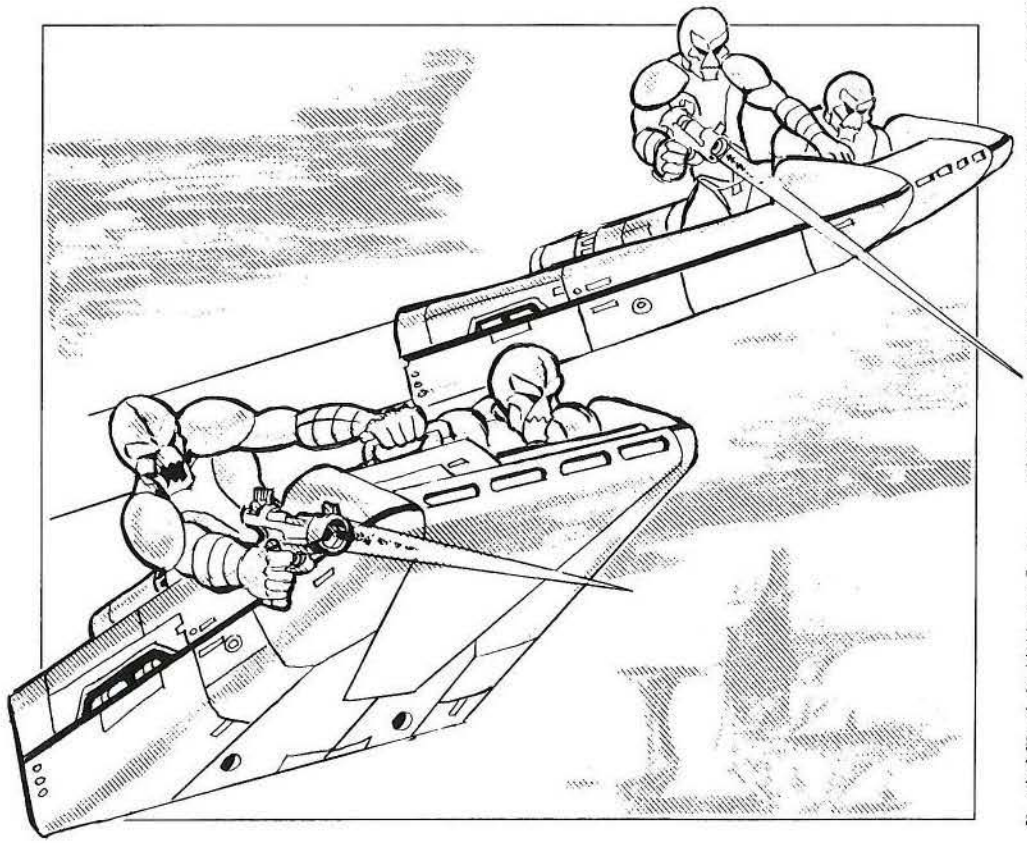
Illegal: The device is of an illegal type or nature, and its illicit quality makes it more valuable to some buyers. The device isn't necessarily more dangerous; it might be used against a certain political power, however, and some people might want to own the device for the thrill of it. Stolen ("hot") items fall into this category. The pistol fires poisoned bullets, banned on most worlds; the clock is actually a terrorist's timing device for explosives; the ATV is banned on a world where the government is forcibly trying to keep its citizens at a low-tech level.

Personal value: The device has special value to one or more persons because it was a gift, is a memento of an event, is a souvenir from a distant place, or is a trophy marking an achievement. Never underestimate "sentimental currency!" The pistol was picked up during a famous military battle; the clock was made on a character's homeworld; the ATV was a gift from a grateful nation or company aided by the ATV's owner.

Social value: The device has enormous value to many people, perhaps a nation, megacorporation, or religion. Its legal possession might bring its owner many intangible benefits, such as social status, public approval, and even a degree of political, religious, or military leadership and power. Obviously, this device might also be stolen or ransomed. The pistol is a museum piece once used by the leader of a major successful revolution, and is now revered as a symbol of freedom; the clock is the corporate symbol for a widely known company that makes timing devices; the ATV once smuggled religious dissidents out of a tyrannical nation and is famous wherever this religion can be found.

Paranormal powers: This is certainly the trickiest of all benefits. Paranormal items gift their users with magical-type abilities, either through godlike technology, the heightening of the user's innate mental powers (psionics) or mutations, or through "real" magic. I can't recommend putting items like these into most "hard" science fiction campaigns, unless you can justify them by making them relics of eons-old cultures whose technology levels surpassed ours to the nth degree. GDW's *Traveller* and *MegaTraveller* games have psionics systems, for example; the GAMMA WORLD® game has science-fantasy mutations similar to magical powers, and FASA's *Shadowrun* game offers magic with its cybertechnology. The two GDW games also include ultrapowerful relics of an extinct culture called the Ancients, with devices such as a hand gun that uses psionic interfacing to cause targets to disintegrate by simply wishing it to be so (see the old *Twilight's Peak* adventure for details on this frightening weapon). The pistol never misses its target, even if badly aimed; the clock gives the user limited time travel; the ATV is haunted by a poltergeist that works the controls to scare away intruders and thieves.

Great buyer need: Perhaps the most important of all elements in determining an item's value is just how badly the buyer wants it. If the buyer is desperate enough and has enough resources, he might offer the world for it. But if he wants it badly enough, he might just *take* the item without asking permission first. The pistol is exactly the type being sought by a small-arms collector; the clock is wanted by someone who believes it has a secret compartment with certain war codes inside; the ATV is wanted by a group of cross-country driving enthusiasts whose own ATV has broken down just before a major race.



Next Time

The next installment of *The Living Galaxy* will feature a look at treasure ideas you can steal from various science fiction (and non-science fiction) sources, and you'll get a broad assortment of valuables that *don't* glitter—the intangible rewards that a futuristic adventurer can receive for a job well done. Until then, keep your own galaxy alive and well. ❑

The Ultimate Contest

Your Chance to Amaze and Confound Your Friends

Some time ago, while the HQ staff was pondering the details of one of the Network's many contests, a tired staffer offhandedly suggested a contest to create contests. Everybody laughed and went back to pondering. Recently, however, a stalwart member made the same suggestion, and the idea didn't seem quite so absurd the second time around. So, here it is—The Network's first contest of contests:

Rules

Create a contest that Network members can complete at home and enter through the mail. Include all rules and materials required for the contest. For example, if you wish to create a contest that requires the participants to look at a piece of artwork you must supply the artwork. Also include the criteria for selecting winners. Any type of contest is acceptable, as long as it will work through the mail. Possible types include writing contests, such as the Network has run many times before; scavenger hunts; trivia quizzes; or puzzles. Feel free to suggest prizes for your contest, but if the Network accepts your contest, Network HQ will have final say on what the prizes will be.

All entries must be typed (one side of the page only), double spaced, on white paper. Put your name and membership number at the top of the first page, and your name at the top of each subsequent page. You may submit multiple entries, but each entry must be accompanied by a separate *standard disclosure form.* (A sample form appeared in issue 53, and you can get additional forms by sending a SASE to HQ.)

Deadline: All entries must be postmarked by February 28th, 1992.

Winning: Entries will be judged on completeness, feasibility, and creativity. You may enter as many times as you wish, but you can win only one prize.

Prizes

Every member who has a contest accepted for use in the Newszine will receive a one-year membership extension and a TSR, Inc. paperback trilogy. (Sorry, you don't get to pick the trilogy.) ❑

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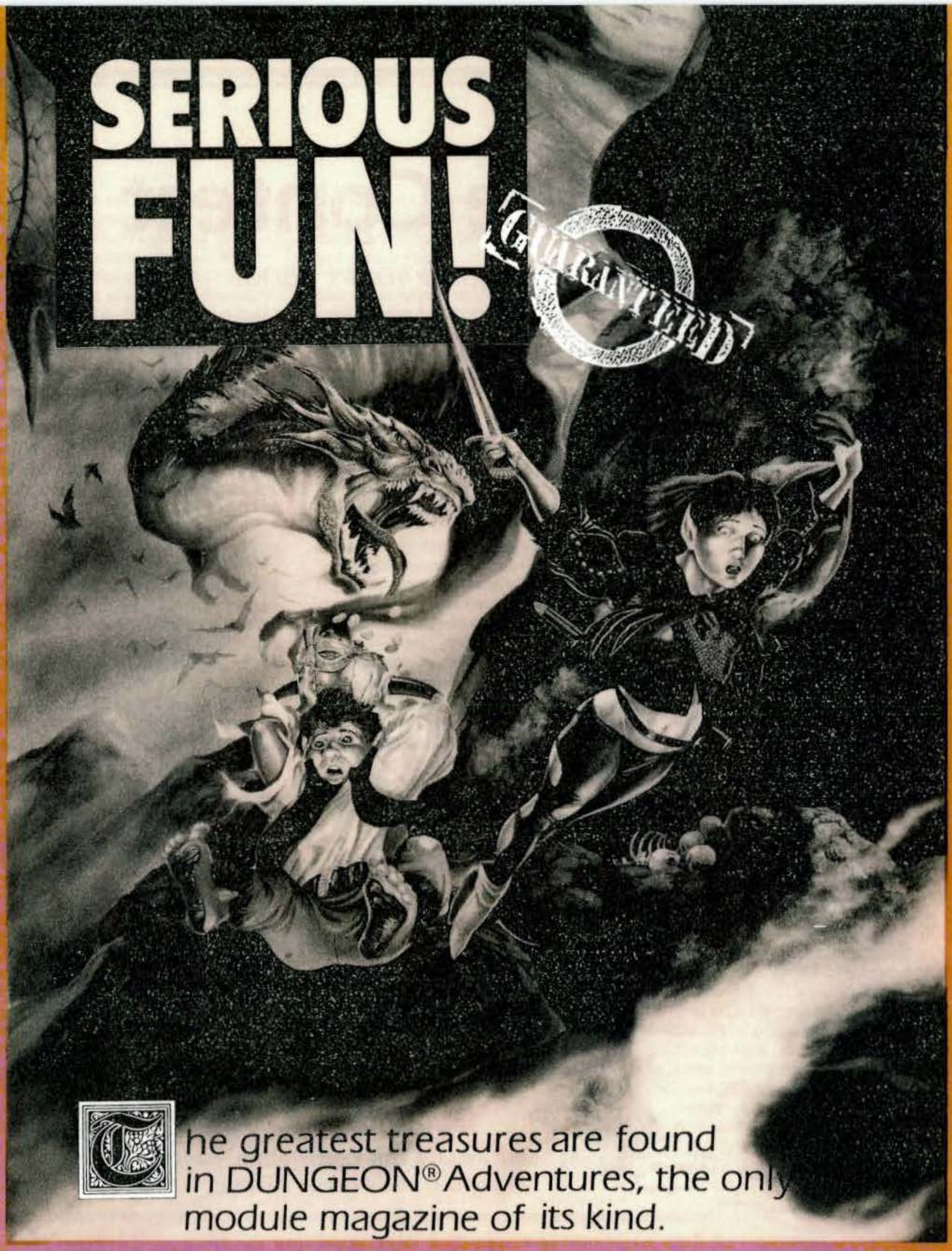
If you want to judge, please list the games you are interested in running.



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POLYHEDRON™ Newszine Convention Announcement

Send this form at least six months before your convention.

For Office Use Only
Date Received
Notes

TYPE OR PRINT

Date Sent: _____

Name of Convention: _____

Dates: _____

Location: _____

_____

_____

Please print the following convention announcement in the POLYHEDRON™ Newszine. I understand this is a membership service, and there is no cost. Further, I understand that the Network reserves the right to edit the announcement.

CHECK ONE

This is a(n)
____ **initial**
____ **revised**
announcement.

CONVENTION COORDINATOR
Name: _____
Address: _____
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Postal Code: _____
Country: _____
Daytime Phone: (_____)_____
Evening Phone: (_____)_____

TOURNAMENT COORDINATOR
Name: _____
Address: _____
_____
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Country: _____
Daytime Phone: (_____)_____
Evening Phone: (_____)_____

At least six months before your convention, send this form to:
Convention Announcement, RPGA™ Network, P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI 53147

Deadline: Entries must be postmarked by February 6th.
Points: First place, 3 points; second place, 2 points; entering, but not placing, 1 point.

Event 6: Item Design

Rules: Create an item for any role-playing game system. This can be a magical treasure, science-fiction gadget, or artifact. Identify the game for which the item was created and give complete game statistics for it.

Entries must be typed, computer printouts are acceptable if they can be read easily. Further, if you use a computer, please indicate on the entry what type of computer you use. Clubs can enter as many items as they wish. However, all entries must come with a separate *standard disclosure form*. All entries must come in the same envelope and must be accompanied by one *Decathlon entry form* which lists all the items the club is entering. A club can earn Decathlon points for only one item.
Deadline: Entries must be postmarked by April 2nd.
Points: First place, 3 points; second place, 2 points; entering, but not placing, 1 point.

Event 7: Single Character Design

Rules: Create a complete character for any role-playing game system. Include all the character's game statistics, history, physical description, and personality.

Entries must be typed, computer printouts are acceptable if they can be read easily. Further, if you use a computer, please indicate on the entry what type of computer you use. Clubs can enter as many characters as they wish. However, all entries must come with a separate *standard disclosure form*. All entries must come in the same envelope and must be accompanied by one *Decathlon entry form* which lists all the characters the club is entering. A club can earn Decathlon points for only one character.
Deadline: Entries must be postmarked by June 2nd.
Points: First place, 3 points; second place, 2 points; entering, but not placing, 1 point.

Event 8: GEN CON® Game Fair Skit Competition

Rules: Each club may present one skit, which will be performed at the members meeting Wednesday night before GEN CON Game Fair. A skit constitutes two or more individuals, and the skit's topic must cover one of the following: *GAMING, CLUB ACTIVITIES, SCIENCE FICTION*, or *FANTASY*. Skits are not to exceed seven (7) minutes, not including set-up time. HQ will provide an offical timekeeper for all skits, and skits which exceed the time limit will be disqualified. HQ will mail a special *Skit Entry Form* for use with this event prior to the Game Fair. All skits must be in good taste; Network HQ is the final arbiter on what constitutes "good taste."
Deadline: Entries must be postmarked by July 30th.
Points: First place, 3 points; second place, 2 points; entering, but not placing, 1 point. Also, the winning club will receive a trophy.

Event 9: Living City Business

Rules: Create a Living City business or government office. Look at recent issues of the Newszine or *Port of Ravens Bluff* for examples of the correct format. Each entry should not exceed eight typed pages.

Entries must be typed, computer printouts are acceptable if they can be read easily. Further, if you use a computer, please indicate on the entry what type of computer you use. Clubs can enter as many businesses as they wish. However, all entries must come with a separate *standard disclosure form*. All entries must come in the same envelope and must be accompanied by one *Decathlon entry form* which lists all the businesses the club is entering. A club can earn Decathlon points for only one business.
Deadline: Entries must be Postmarked by October 5th.
Points: First place, 5 points; second place, 3 points; third place 2 points; entering, but not placing, 1 point.

Event 10: Tournament Writing

Rules: Create a one-, two-, or three-round tournament—plus six characters for any popular role-playing game system. Each round must consist of six to eight well-developed encounters. Tournament writing guidelines are available from Network HQ. A round cannot exceed 30 pages, including maps.

Entries must be typed, computer printouts are acceptable if they can be read easily. Further, if you use a computer, please indicate on the entry what type of computer you use. Clubs can enter as many tournaments as they wish. However, all entries must come with a separate *standard disclosure form*. All entries must come in the same envelope and must be accompanied by one *Decathlon entry form* which lists all the tournaments the club is entering. A club can earn Decathlon points for only one tournament.
Deadline: Entries must be Postmarked by October 5th.
Points: First place, 6 points; second place, 4 points; third place 3 points; entering, but not placing, 1 point.

In addition, we will run the winning tournament at the GEN CON Game Fair or another large convention. And the winning authors will receive a plaque.

Winning/Prizes

The maximum possible club score in the 1992 Decthlon is 35; the club with the highest point total wins the competition.

The winning club will receive a trophy, a $100.00 gift certificate to the Mail Order Hobby Shop, a one-year extension to its club membership, and bragging rights for about a year. The second place club will receive a $75.00 gift certificate, a one-year club membership extension, and the respect and admiration of most other official clubs. The third place club will receive a $50.00 gift certificate, a one-year club membership, and the satisfaction that comes from knowing they hung in there with the big boys. The fourth place club will receive a $25.00 gift certificate and the respect of the HQ staff, at least. Network HQ reserves the right to award additional prizes for outstanding or unusual performances over the course of the year.

1992 Games Decathlon

A Year-Long Contest for Network Clubs

The third annual Games Decathlon is about to begin. Each year, the Network offers all registered clubs a chance to compete in a series of 10 events which challenge each club's gaming skill, creativity, and team work.

As this is being written, the 1991 Decathlon is drawing to a close, with the leading club, The PM Players of Chicago, IL, trying to hold off the defending champion, The ARC Fellowship of Davidson, NC, and host of other clubs eager to claim top honors. Stiff competition and friendly rivalries are all part of the fun.

If you want to get in on all the excitement, organize your own Network club. Club membership forms are available from Network HQ. Network clubs also enjoy special offers, discounts, free memberships on computer networks, and their own exclusive tournaments at GEN CON® Game Fair, Winter Fantasy, and others—which are not part of the Decathlon.

The events that make up each Decathlon are chosen by the Members' Advisory Committee. The events in the 1992 Decathlon are:

Events 1-4: Convention Tournaments

Rules: Each club may select up to four events from the following list to count toward their 1992 Decathlon effort. To select a tournament, a club officer must designate a club member to represent the club at the event by sending Network HQ a *Decathlon entry form* (or a legible facsimile) postmarked by the deadline listed below. (Each club was mailed a sample form this past fall. Additional forms are available by sending a SASE to Network HQ.) At the tournament, the representative should write "1992 Decathlon" and the club name in the upper right hand corner of his or her voting sheet. Only the first four Decathlon tournaments a club officially enters count toward the club's total—win or lose.

Points: If the club member designated on the form wins first place in the tournament, his or her club receives 3 Decathlon points. If the designated member finishes second, the club receives 1 point. Note that it is possible for more than one club to earn points at a single tournament.

Official 1992 Decathlon Tournaments

Convention/Event Entry Deadline

Winter Fantasy, Jan., WI
AD&D® game Feature Dec. 17
Pandemonium, Jan., Ontario Canada
AD&D game Feature Dec. 17
CANCON, Jan., Canberra, Australia
AD&D game Feature Dec. 17
Orc Con, Feb., CA
AD&D game Feature Jan. 20
Ghengis Con, Feb., CO
Champions Jan. 20
ConnCon, March, CT
Call of Cthulhu Mar. 6
Magnum Opus Con, March, GA
RAVENLOFT™ game Feb. 16
Gamescaucus, May, CA
Star Wars Apr. 16
Glathricon, June, IN
AD&D game Benefit May 29
Arcon, June, Norway
AD&D game Feature May 16
Cos Con, July, PA
AD&D game Benefit June 17
GEN CON® Game Fair, Aug., WI
Fluffy Quest July 30
Fall Con, Oct., NE
Fluffy BOOT HILL® game Sep. 16
Contrary, Oct., MA
BOOT HILL game Team Sep. 16
Council of Five Nations, Oct., NY
AD&D game Feature Sep. 16
European GEN CON Game Fair, Nov., England
AD&D game Open Oct. 16
GEnie Online Con, Dec., by Modem
XXVc™ game Nov. 19

Event 5: Monster Design

Rules: Create a new monster for the AD&D game using the format from the Monstrous Compendiums. A monster can be for any of the various AD&D game worlds.

Entries must be typed, computer printouts are acceptable if they can be read easily. Further, if you use a computer, please indicate on the entry what type of computer you use. Clubs can enter as many monsters as they wish. However, all entries must come with a separate *standard disclosure form*. All entries must come in the same envelope and must be accompanied by one *Decathlon entry form* which lists all the monsters the club is entering. A club can earn Decathlon points for only one monster.

Members of the ARC Fellowship pose with their Decathlon trophy at the GEN CON® Game Fair.

The ARC Fellows